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AUTOBIOGRAPHY &c. OF MRS. PIOZZI

VOL. I.

Roche del. H.Adlard sc.

Mrs Piozzi.

Æt. 76.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

LETTERS AND LITERARY REMAINS

OF

MRS. PIOZZI (THRALE)

EDITED WITH NOTES

AND

AN INTRODUCTORY ACCOUNT OF HER LIFE AND WRITINGS

BY

A. HAYWARD, ESQ. Q.C.

Welcome, Associate Forms, where'er we turn;
Fill, Streatham's Hebe, the Johnsonian urn—St. Stephen's

In Two Volumes

VOL. I.

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ERRATA IN VOL. I.

p. 115, l. 16, for "impovershing" read "impoverishing."
118, l. 7, for "constantly" read "frequently."
130, l. 4 from the bottom, for "*antè*, p. 53" read "*antè*, p. 100."
137, l. 21, for "suffered" read "supposed."
142, l. 17, read "if" before "you."
175, l. 7 from the bottom, dele "repeatedly."
177, in the second couplet quoted, for "there" read "three."
296, note, for "Cadnus" read "Cadenus."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, &c.

OF

MRS. PIOZZI.

INTRODUCTION:

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF MRS. PIOZZI.

DR. JOHNSON has been hailed by acclamation the literary colossus of an epoch when the galaxy of British authorship sparkled with the names of Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Warburton, the Wartons, Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, Gray, Goldsmith, and Burke. Any one of these may have surpassed the great lexicographer in some one branch of learning or domain of genius; but as a man of letters, in the highest sense of the term, he towered pre-eminent, and his superiority to each of them (except Burke) in general acquirements, intellectual power, and force of expression, was hardly contested by his cotemporaries. To be associated with his name has become a title of distinction in itself; and some members of his circle enjoy, and have fairly earned, a peculiar advantage in this respect. In their capacity of satellites revolving round the sun of their idolatry, they attracted and reflected his light and heat. As humble companions of their *Magnolia grandiflora*, they did more than live with it*; they gathered and

* "Je ne suis pas la rose, mais j'ai vécu avec elle."—*Constant.*

preserved the choicest of its flowers. Thanks to them, his reputation is kept alive more by what has been saved of his conversation than by his books; and his colloquial exploits necessarily revive the memory of the friends (or victims) who elicited and recorded them.

If the two most conspicuous amongst these have hitherto gained notoriety rather than what is commonly understood by fame, a discriminating posterity is already beginning to make reparation for the wrong. Boswell's "Letters to Temple," edited by Mr. Francis, with "Boswelliana," printed for the Philobiblion Society by Mr. Milnes, led, in 1857, to a revisal of the harsh sentence passed on one whom the most formidable of his censors, Lord Macaulay, has declared to be not less decidedly the first of biographers, than Homer is the first of heroic poets, Shakspeare the first of dramatists, or Demosthenes the first of orators. The result was eminently favourable to Boswell, although the vulnerable points of his character were still more glaringly displayed. The appeal about to be hazarded on behalf of Mrs. Piozzi, will involve little or no risk of this kind. Her ill-wishers made the most of the event which so injuriously affected her reputation at the time of its occurrence; and the marked tendency of every additional disclosure of the circumstances has been to elevate her. No candid person will read her Autobiography, or her Letters, without arriving at the conclusion that her long life was morally, if not conventionally, irreproachable; and that her talents were

sufficient to confer on her writings a value and attraction of their own, apart from what they possess as illustrations of a period or a school. When the papers out of which these volumes are principally composed were laid before Lord Macaulay, he gave it as his opinion that they afforded materials for a "most interesting and durably popular volume."

They comprise:—

1. Autobiographical Memoirs.

2. Letters, mostly addressed to the late Sir James Fellowes.

3. Fugitive pieces of her composition, most of which have never appeared in print.

4. Manuscript notes by her on Wraxall's Memoirs, and on her own published works, namely: "Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., during the last twenty years of his life," one volume, 1786: "Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., &c.," in two volumes, 1788: "Observations and Reflections made in the course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany," in two volumes, 1789: "Retrospection; or, Review of the most striking and important Events, Characters, Situations, and their Consequences which the last Eighteen Hundred Years have presented to the View of Mankind," in two volumes, quarto, 1801.

The "Autobiographical Memoirs," and the annotated books, were given by her to the late Sir James Fellowes, of Adbury House, Hants, M.D., F.R.S., to whom the letters were addressed. He and the late Sir John Piozzi

Salusbury were her executors, and the present publication takes place in pursuance of an agreement with their personal representatives, the Rev. G. A. Salusbury, Rector of Westbury, Salop, and Captain J. Butler Fellowes.

Valuable additions to the original stock of materials have reached me since the announcement of the work. The Rev. Dr. Wellesley, the Principal of New Inn Hall, has kindly placed at my disposal his copy of Boswell's "Life of Johnson," (edition of 1816), plentifully sprinkled with marginal notes by Mrs. Piozzi. The Rev. Samuel Lysons, of Hempsted Court, Gloucester, has liberally allowed me the free use of his valuable collection of books and manuscripts, including numerous letters from Mrs. Piozzi to his father and uncle, the Rev. Daniel Lysons and Mr. Samuel Lysons, the friend and correspondent of Johnson; and I shall have many more obligations to acknowledge as I proceed.

From 1776 to 1809 Mrs. Piozzi kept a copious diary and note-book, called "Thraliana." Johnson thus alludes to it in a letter of September 6th, 1777: "As you have little to do, I suppose you are pretty diligent at the 'Thraliana;' and a very curious collection posterity will find it. Do not remit the practice of writing down occurrences as they arise, of whatever kind, and be very punctual in annexing the dates. Chronology, you know, is the eye of history. Do not omit painful casualties or unpleasing passages; they make the variegation of existence; and there are many passages of which I will not promise, with Æneas, *et*

hæc olim meminisse juvabit." 'Thraliana,' which at one time she thought of burning, is now in the possession of Mr. Salusbury, who deems it of too private and delicate a character to be submitted to strangers, but has kindly supplied me with some curious passages and much valuable information extracted from it.

Unless Mrs. Piozzi's character and social position are freshly remembered, her reminiscences and literary remains will lose much of their interest and utility. It has, therefore, been thought advisable to recapitulate, by way of introduction, what has been ascertained from other sources concerning her; especially during her intimacy with Johnson, which lasted nearly twenty years, and exercised a marked influence on his tone of mind.

"This year (1765)," says Boswell, "was distinguished by his (Johnson) being introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and member of Parliament for the borough of Southwark. . . Johnson used to give this account of the rise of Mr. Thrale's father: 'He worked at six shillings a week for twenty years in the great brewery, which afterwards was his own. The proprietor of it had an only daughter, who was married to a nobleman. It was not fit that a peer should continue the business. On the old man's death, therefore, the brewery was to be sold. To find a purchaser for so large a property was a difficult matter; and, after some time, it was suggested,

that it would be advisable to treat with Thrale, a sensible, active, honest man, who had been employed in the house, and to transfer the whole to him for thirty thousand pounds, security being taken upon the property. This was accordingly settled. In eleven years Thrale paid the purchase-money. He acquired a large fortune, and lived to be a member of Parliament for Southwark. But what was most remarkable was the liberality with which he used his riches. He gave his son and daughters the best education. The esteem which his good conduct procured him from the nobleman who had married his master's daughter, made him be treated with much attention; and his son, both at school and at the university of Oxford, associated with young men of the first rank. His allowance from his father, after he left college, was splendid; not less than a thousand a year. This, in a man who had risen as old Thrale did, was a very extraordinary instance of generosity. He used to say, 'If this young dog does not find so much after I am gone as he expects, let him remember that he has had a great deal in my own time.'"

What is here stated regarding Thrale's origin, on the alleged authority of Johnson, is incorrect. The elder Thrale was the nephew of Halsey, the proprietor of the brewery whose daughter was married to a nobleman (Lord Cobham), and he naturally nourished hopes of being his uncle's successor. In the Abbey Church of St. Albans, there is a monument to some members of the Thrale family who died between 1676 and 1704,

adorned with a shield of arms and a crest on a ducal coronet. Mrs. Thrale's marginal note on Boswell's account of her husband's family is curious and characteristic:

"Edmund Halsey was son to a miller at St. Albans, with whom he quarrelled, like Ralph in the 'Maid of the Mill,' and ran away to London with a very few shillings in his pocket. He was eminently handsome, and old Child, of the Anchor Brewhouse, Southwark, took him in as what we call a broomstick clerk, to sweep the yard, &c. Edmund Halsey behaved so well he was soon preferred to be a house-clerk, and then, having free access to his master's table, married his only daughter, and succeeded to the business upon Child's demise. Being now rich and prosperous, he turned his eyes homewards, where he learned that sister Sukey had married a hardworking man at Offley in Hertfordshire, and had many children. He sent for one of them to London (my Mr. Thrale's father); said he would make a man of him, and did so: but made him work very hard, and treated him very roughly, Halsey being more proud than tender, and his only child, a daughter, married to Lord Cobham.

"Old Thrale, however, as these fine writers call him, —then a young fellow, and, like his uncle, eminent for personal beauty,—made himself so useful to Mr. Halsey that the weight of the business fell entirely on him; and while Edmund was canvassing the borough and visiting the viscountess, Ralph Thrale was getting money both for himself and his principal; who, envious

of his success with a wench they both liked, but who preferred the young man to the old one, died, leaving him never a guinea, and he bought the brewhouse of Lord and Lady Cobham, making an excellent bargain, with the money he had saved."

When, in the next page but one, Boswell describes Thrale as presenting the character of a plain independent English squire, she writes: "No, no! Mr. Thrale's manners presented the character of a gay man of the town: like Millamant, in Congreve's comedy, he abhorred the country and everything in it."

In "Thraliana" after a corresponding statement, she adds: "He (the elder Thrale) educated his son and three daughters quite in a high style. His son he wisely connected with the Cobhams and their relations, Grenvilles, Lyttletons, and Pitts, to whom he lent money, and they lent assistance of every other kind, so that my Mr. Thrale was bred up at Stowe, and Stoke, and Oxford, and every genteel place; had been abroad with Lord Westcote, whose expenses old Thrale cheerfully paid, I suppose, who was thus a kind of tutor to the young man, who had not failed to profit by these advantages, and who was, when he came down to Offley to see his father's birthplace, a very handsome and well accomplished gentleman."

After expatiating on the advantages of birth, and the presumption of new men in attempting to found a new system of gentility, Boswell proceeds: "Mr. Thrale had married Miss Hester Lynch Salusbury, of good Welsh extraction, a lady of lively talents, improved by edu-

cation. That Johnson's introduction into Mr. Thrale's family, which contributed so much to the happiness of his life, was owing to her desire for his conversation, is a very probable and the general supposition: but it is not the truth. Mr. Murphy, who was intimate with Mr. Thrale, having spoken very highly of Dr. Johnson, he was requested to make them acquainted. This being mentioned to Johnson, he accepted of an invitation to dinner at Thrale's, and was so much pleased with his reception, both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they so much pleased with him, that his invitations to their house were more and more frequent, till at last he became one of the family, and an apartment was appropriated to him, both in their house at Southwark and in their villa at Streatham."

Boswell was jealous of Mrs. Thrale (as it is most convenient to call her till her second marriage) as a rival biographer, and lost no opportunity of depreciating her. He might at least, however, have stated that instead of sanctioning the "general supposition" as to the introduction, she herself supplied the account of it which he adopts. In her "Anecdotes" she says:—

"The first time I ever saw this extraordinary man was in the year 1764, when Mr. Murphy, who had long been the friend and confidential intimate of Mr. Thrale, persuaded him to wish for Johnson's conversation, extolling it in terms which that of no other person could have deserved, till we were only in doubt how to obtain his company, and find an excuse for the invitation. The celebrity of Mr. Woodhouse, a

shoemaker, whose verses were at that time the subject of common discourse, soon afforded a pretence, and Mr. Murphy brought Johnson to meet him, giving me general caution not to be surprised at his figure, dress, or behaviour. . . . Mr. Johnson liked his new acquaintance so much, however, that from that time he dined with us every Thursday through the winter, and in the autumn of the next year he followed us to Brighthelmstone, whence we were gone before his arrival; so he was disappointed and enraged, and wrote us a letter expressive of anger, which we were very desirous to pacify, and to obtain his company again if possible. Mr. Murphy brought him back to us again very kindly, and from that time his visits grew more frequent, till in the year 1766 his health, which he had always complained of, grew so exceedingly bad, that he could not stir out of his room in the court he inhabited for many *weeks* together, I think *months*."

It is strange that they should differ about the date of the introduction by a year. She goes on to say that when she and her husband called on Johnson one morning in this court (Johnson's Court, Fleet Street), he gave way to such an uncontrolled burst of despair regarding the world to come, that Mr. Thrale tried to stop his mouth by placing one hand before it, and before leaving him desired her to prevail on him to quit his close habitation for a period and come with them to Streatham. He complied, and took up his abode with them from before Midsummer till after Michaelmas in that year. During the next sixteen

years a room in their house was set apart for him.

The principal difficulty at first was to induce him to live peaceably with her mother, who took a strong dislike to him, and constantly led the conversation to topics which he detested, such as foreign news and politics. He revenged himself by writing to the newspapers accounts of events which never happened, for the sole purpose of mystifying her; and probably more than one of his mischievous fictions have passed current for history. They made up their differences before her death, and a Latin epitaph of the most eulogistic order from his pen is inscribed upon her tomb.

It had been well for Mrs. Thrale and her guests if there had existed no more serious objection to Johnson as an inmate. At the commencement of the acquaintance, he was fifty-six; an age when habits are ordinarily fixed; and many of his were of a kind which it required no common temper and tact to tolerate or control. They had been formed at a period when he was frequently subjected to the worst extremities of humiliating poverty and want. He describes Savage, without money to pay for a night's lodging in a cellar, walking about the streets till he was weary, and sleeping in the summer upon a bulk or in the winter amongst the ashes of a glass-house. He was Savage's associate on more than one occasion of the sort. Whilst at college, he threw away the shoes which were left at his door to replace the worn-out pair in which he appeared daily. His clothes were in so tattered a state whilst he was

writing for the "Gentleman's Magazine" that, instead of taking his seat at Cave's table, he sate behind a screen and had his victuals sent to him.

Talking of the symptoms of Christopher Smart's madness, he said, "Another charge was that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it." In general his wigs were very shabby, and their fore-parts were burned away by the near approach of the candle, which his short-sightedness rendered necessary in reading. At Streatham, Mr. Thrale's valet had always a better wig ready, with which he met Johnson at the parlour door when dinner was announced, and as he went up stairs to bed, the same man followed him with another.

One of his applications to Cave for a trifling advance of money is signed *Impransus;* and he told Boswell that he could fast two days without inconvenience, and had never been hungry but once. What he meant by hungry is not easy to explain, for his every day manner of eating was that of a half-famished man. When at table, he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment; his looks were riveted to his plate, till he had satisfied his appetite; which was indulged with such intenseness, that the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. Until he left off drinking fermented liquors altogether, he acted on the maxim "claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes." He preferred the strongest because he said it did its work (*i. e.* intoxicate) the soonest. He used to pour capillaire into his port wine, and melted butter into his

chocolate. His favourite dishes are accurately enumerated by Peter Pindar:

MADAME PIOZZI (*loquitur*).

"Dear Doctor Johnson lov'd a leg of pork,
And hearty on it would his grinders work:
He lik'd to eat it so much over done,
That *one* might shake the flesh from off the bone.
A veal pye too, with sugar cramm'd and plums,
Was wond'rous grateful to the Doctor's gums.
Though us'd from morn to night on fruit to stuff,
He vow'd his belly never had enough."

Mr. Thackeray relates in his "Irish Sketches" that on his asking for currant jelly for his venison at a public dinner, the waiter replied, "It's all gone, your honour, but there's some capital lobster sauce left." This would have suited Johnson equally well, or better; he was so fond of lobster sauce that he would call for the sauce-boat and pour the whole of its remaining contents over his plum-pudding. A clergyman who once travelled with him relates, "The coach halted as usual for dinner, which seemed to be a deeply interesting business to Johnson, who vehemently attacked a dish of stewed carp, using his fingers only in feeding himself."

With all this he affected great nicety of palate, and did not like being asked to a plain dinner. "It was a good dinner enough," he would remark, "but it was not a dinner to ask a man to." He was so displeased with the performances of a nobleman's French cook, that he exclaimed with vehemence, "I'd throw such a rascal into the river;" and in reference to one of his

Edinburgh hosts he said, "As for Maclaurin's imitation of a made dish, it was a wretched attempt."

His voice was loud, and his gesticulations, voluntary or involuntary, singularly uncouth. He had superstitious fancies about crossing thresholds or squares in the carpet with the right or left leg foremost, and when he did not appear at dinner, might be found vainly endeavouring to pass a particular spot in the anteroom. He loved late hours, or more properly (says Mrs. Thrale) hated early ones. Nothing was more terrifying to him than the idea of going to bed, which he never would call going to rest, or suffer another to call it so. "I lie down that my acquaintance may sleep; but I lie down to endure oppressive misery, and soon rise again to pass the night in anxiety and pain." When people could be induced to sit up with him, they were often amply compensated by his rich flow of mind; but the resulting sacrifice of health and comfort in an establishment where this sitting up became habitual, was inevitably great.* Instead of being grateful, he always maintained that no one forbore his own gratification for the purpose of pleasing another, and "if one did sit up, it was probably to amuse oneself." Boswell excuses his wife for not coinciding in his enthusiasm, by admitting that his illustrious friend's irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as turning the candles with

* Dr. Burney states that in 1765 "he very frequently met Johnson at Streatham, where they had many long conversations, after sitting up as long as the fire and candles lasted, and much longer than the patience of the servants subsisted."

their ends downwards when they did not burn bright enough, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, could not but be displeasing to a lady. He was generally last at breakfast, but one morning happened to be first and waited some time alone; when afterwards twitted by Mrs. Thrale with irregularity, he replied, "Madam, I do not like to come down to vacuity."

If his early familiarity with all the miseries of destitution, aggravated by disease, had increased his natural roughness and irritability, on the other hand it had helped largely to bring out his sterling virtues,—his discriminating charity, his genuine benevolence, his well-timed generosity, his large-hearted sympathy with real suffering or sorrow. He said it was enough to make a plain man sick to hear pity lavished on a family reduced by losses to exchange a palace for a comfortable cottage; and when condolence was demanded for a lady of rank in mourning for a baby, he contrasted her with a washerwoman with half-a-dozen children dependent on her daily labour for their daily bread. *

Lord Macaulay thus portrays the objects of Johnson's hospitality as soon as he had got a house to cover them. "It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment he had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations

* "It's weel wi' you gentles that can sit in the house wi' handkerchers at your een when ye lose a friend; but the like o' us maun to our wark again, if our hearts were beating as hard as any hammer."—*The Antiquary*.

were her blindness and her poverty. But in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Mrs. Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor called Levet, who bled and dosed coalheavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this menagerie." *

It is strange that Lord Macaulay should have given this depreciating description of Levet, having, as he must have had, Johnson's lines "On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet, a Practiser in Physic," full in his recollection: —

> "Well try'd through many a varying year,
> See Levet to the grave descend,
> Officious, innocent, sincere,
> Of every friendless name the friend.
>
> Yet still he fills affection's eye,
> Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;
> Nor, letter'd Arrogance, deny
> Thy praise to merit unrefin'd."

This picture of Johnson's interior is true in the main, when it is added that the inmates of his house were quarrelling from morning to night with one another,

* Miscellaneous Writings, vol. i. p. 293.

with his negro servant, or with himself. In one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale, he says, "Williams hates everybody: Levet hates Desmoulins, and does not love Williams: Desmoulins hates them both: Poll (Miss Carmichael) loves none of them." In a conversation at Streatham, reported by Madame D'Arblay, the *menagerie* was thus humorously described: —

"*Mrs. Thrale.* — Mr. Levet, I suppose, Sir, has the office of keeping the hospital in health? for he is an apothecary.

"*Dr. J.* — Levet, Madam, is a brutal fellow, but I have a good regard for him; for his brutality is in his manners, not his mind.

"*Mr. Thrale.* — But how do you get your dinners drest?

"*Dr. J.* — Why De Mullin has the chief management of the kitchen; but our roasting is not magnificent, for we have no jack.

"*Mr. T.* — No jack? Why how do they manage without?

"*Dr. J.* — Small joints, I believe, they manage with a string, and larger are done at the tavern. I have some thoughts (with a profound gravity) of buying a jack, because I think a jack is some credit to a house.

"*Mr. T.* — Well, but you'll have a spit, too?

"*Dr. J.* — No, Sir, no; that would be superfluous; for we shall never use it; and if a jack is seen, a spit will be presumed!

"*Mrs. T.* — But pray, Sir, who is the Poll you talk of? She that you used to abet in her quarrels with

Mrs. Williams, and call out, 'At her again, Poll! Never flinch, Poll!'

"*Dr. J.* — Why I took to Poll very well at first, but she won't do upon a nearer examination.

"*Mrs. T.* — How came she among you, Sir?

"*Dr. J.* — Why I don't rightly remember, but we could spare her very well from us. Poll is a stupid slut; I had some hopes of her at first; but when I talked to her tightly and closely, I could make nothing of her; she was wiggle waggle, and I could never persuade her to be categorical."

The effect of an unbroken residence with such inmates, on a man of irritable temper subject to morbid melancholy, may be guessed; and the merit of the Thrales in rescuing him from it, and in soothing down his asperities, can hardly be over-estimated. Lord Macaulay says, they were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated preferred their house to every other in London (where, by the way, very few of the same class were then open to him), and suggests that even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilised society, including his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, and the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his food, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. His hostess does not appear to have viewed them in that light, and she was able to command the best company of the intellectual order without the aid of a "lion," or a bear. If his conversation attracted many, it drove away some, and silenced more. He accounted for the little attention

paid him by the great, by saying that "great lords and great ladies do not like to have their mouths stopped," as if this was peculiar to them as a class. "My leddie," remarks Cuddie in "Old Mortality," "canna weel bide to be contradicted, as I ken nacbody likes, if they could help themselves."

Johnson was in the zenith of his fame when literature, politics, and fashion began to blend together again by hardly perceptible shades, like the colours in shot-silk, as they had partially done in the Augustan age of Queen Anne. One marked sign was the formation of the Literary Club (The Club, as it still claims to be called), which brought together such men as Fox, Burke, Gibbon, Johnson, Goldsmith, Garrick, Reynolds, and Beauclerc, besides blackballing a bishop (the Bishop of Chester), and a lord-chancellor (Camden). Yet it is curious to observe within how narrow a circle of good houses the Doctor's engagements were restricted. Reynolds, Paoli, Beauclerc, Allan Ramsay, Hoole, Dilly, Strahan, Lord Lucan, Langton, Garrick, and the Club formed his main reliance as regards dinners; and we find Boswell recording with manifest symptoms of exultation in 1781: "I dined with him at a bishop's, where were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Berenger, and some more company. He had dined the day before at another bishop's." His reverence for the episcopal bench well merited some return on their part. Mr. Seward saw him presented to the Archbishop of York, and described his bow to an Archbishop as such a studied elaboration of homage, such an extension of

limb, such a flexion of body, as have seldom or ever been equalled. The lay nobility were not equally grateful, although his deference for the peerage was extreme. Except in Scotland or on his travels, he is seldom found dining with a nobleman.

Soon after his domestication at Streatham, the Blue Stocking Clubs came into fashion, so called from a casual allusion to the blue stockings of an *habitué*, Mr. Stillingfleet. Their founders were Mrs. Vesey and Mrs. Montagu; but according to Madame D'Arblay, "more bland and more gleeful than that of either of them, was the personal celebrity of Mrs. Thrale. Mrs. Vesey, indeed, gentle and diffident, dreamed not of any competition, but Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Thrale had long been set up as rival candidates for colloquial eminence, and each of them thought the other alone worthy to be her peer. Openly therefore when they met, they combated for precedence of admiration, with placid though high-strained intellectual exertion on the one side, and an exuberant pleasantry or classical allusion or quotation on the other; without the smallest malice in either."

Wraxall, who makes the same comparison, remarks: "Mrs. Thrale always appeared to me to possess at least as much information, a mind as cultivated, and more brilliancy of intellect than Mrs. Montagu, but she did not descend among men from such an eminence, and she talked much more, as well as more unguardedly, on every subject. She was the provider and conductress of Johnson, who lived almost constantly under her roof, or

more properly under that of Mr. Thrale, both in Town and at Streatham. He did not, however, spare her more than other women in his attacks if she courted and provoked his animadversions."

Although he seldom appeared to greater advantage than when under the combined spell of feminine influence and rank, his demeanour varied with his mood. On Miss Monkton's (afterwards Lady Cork) insisting, one evening, that Sterne's writings were very pathetic, Johnson bluntly denied it. "I am sure," she rejoined, "they have affected me." "Why," said Johnson, smiling and rolling himself about, "that is because, dearest, you're a dunce." When she some time afterwards mentioned this to him, he said, with equal truth and politeness, "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it."

He did not come off so well on another occasion, when the presence of women whom he respected might be expected to operate as a check. Talking, at Mrs. Garrick's, of a very respectable author, he told us, says Boswell, "a curious circumstance in his life, which was that he had married a printer's devil. *Reynolds.* 'A printer's devil, Sir! why, I thought a printer's devil was a creature with a black face and in rags.' *Johnson.* 'Yes, Sir. But I suppose he had her face washed, and put clean clothes on her.' Then, looking very serious, and very earnest. 'And she did not disgrace him;—the woman had a bottom of good sense.' The word *bottom* thus introduced was so ludicrous when contrasted with his gravity, that most of us

could not forbear tittering and laughing; though I recollect that the Bishop of Killaloe kept his countenance with perfect steadiness, while Miss Hannah More slily hid her face behind a lady's back who sat on the same settee with her. His pride could not bear that any expression of his should excite ridicule, when he did not intend it: he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotic power, glanced sternly around, and called out in a strong tone, 'Where's the merriment?' Then collecting himself, and looking awful, to make us feel how he could impose restraint, and as it were searching his mind for a still more ludicrous word, he slowly pronounced, 'I say the *woman* was *fundamentally* sensible;' as if he had said, Hear this now, and laugh if you dare. We all sat composed as at a funeral."

This resembles the influence exercised by the "great commoner" over the House of Commons. An instance being mentioned of his throwing an adversary into irretrievable confusion by an arrogant expression of contempt, the late Mr. Charles Butler asked the relator, an eye-witness, whether the House did not laugh at the ridiculous figure of the poor member. "No, Sir," was the reply, "we were too much awed to laugh."

It was a redeeming feature in Johnson's character that he was extremely fond of female society; so fond, indeed, that on coming to London he was obliged to be on his guard against the temptations to which it exposed him. He left off attending the Green Room, telling Garrick, "I'll come no more behind your scenes, Davy;

for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my amorous propensities."

The proneness of his imagination to wander in this forbidden field is unwittingly betrayed by his remarking at Sky, in support of the doctrine that animal substances are less cleanly than vegetable: "I have *often* thought that, if I kept a seraglio, the ladies should all wear linen gowns, or cotton, I mean stuffs made of vegetable substances. I would have no silks: you cannot tell when it is clean: it will be very nasty before it is perceived to be so; linen detects its own dirtiness." His virtue thawed instead of becoming more rigid in the North. "This evening," records Boswell of their visit to an Hebridean chief, "one of our married ladies, a lively pretty little woman, good-humouredly sat down upon Dr. Johnson's knee, and being encouraged by some of the company, put her hands round his neck and kissed him. 'Do it again,' said he, 'and let us see who will tire first.' He kept her on his knee some time, whilst he and she drank tea."

The Rev. Dr. Maxwell relates in his "Collectanea," that "Two young women from Staffordshire visited him when I was present, to consult him on the subject of Methodism, to which they were inclined. 'Come,' said he, 'you pretty fools, dine with Maxwell and me at the Mitre, and we will talk over that subject;' which they did, and after dinner he took one of them upon his knee, and fondled her for half an hour together."

Women almost always like men who like them. Johnson, despite of his unwieldy figure, scarred features,

and uncouth gestures, was a favourite with the fair; and talked of affairs of the heart as things of which he was entitled to speak from personal experience as confidently as of any other moral or social topics. He told Mrs. Thrale, without the smallest consciousness of presumption or what Mr. Square would term the unfitness of things, of his and Lord Lyttleton's having contended for Miss Boothby's preference with an emulation that occasioned hearty disgust and ended in lasting animosity. "You may see," he added, when the Lives of the Poets were printed, "that dear Boothby is at my heart still. She would delight in that fellow Lyttleton's company though, all that I could do, and I cannot forgive even his memory the preference given by a mind like hers." *

Mr. Croker surmises that "Molly Aston," not dear Boothby, must have been the object of this rivalry; and the surmise is strengthened by Johnson's calling Molly the loveliest creature he ever saw; adding (to Mrs. Thrale), "My wife was a little jealous, and happening one day when walking in the country to meet a fortune-hunting gipsy, Mrs. Johnson made the wench look at my hand, but soon repented of her curiosity, 'for,' says the gipsy, 'your heart is divided between a Betty and a Molly: Betty loves you best, but you take most delight in Molly's

* In point of personal advantages the man of rank and fashion and the scholar were nearly on a par.

"But who is this astride the pony,
So long, so lean, so lank, so bony?
Dat be de great orator, Littletony."

company.' When I turned about to laugh, I saw my wife was crying. 'Pretty charmer, she had no reason.'" This pretty charmer was in her forty-eighth year when he married her, he being then twenty-seven. He told Beauclerc that it was a love match on both sides; and Garrick used to draw ludicrous pictures of their mutual fondness, which he heightened by representing her as short, fat, tawdrily dressed, and highly rouged.

One of Rochefoucauld's maxims is: "Young women who do not wish to appear *coquettes*, and men of advanced years who do not wish to appear ridiculous, should never speak of love as of a thing in which they could take part." Mrs. Thrale relates an amusing instance of Johnson's adroitness in escaping from the dilemma: "As we had been saying one day that no subject failed of receiving dignity from the manner in which Mr. Johnson treated it, a lady at my house said, she would make him talk about love; and took her measures accordingly, deriding the novels of the day because they treated about love. 'It is not,' replied our philosopher, 'because they treat, as you call it, about love, but because they treat of nothing, that they are despicable: we must not ridicule a passion which he who never felt never was happy, and he who laughs at never deserves to feel—a passion which has caused the change of empires, and the loss of worlds —a passion which has inspired heroism and subdued avarice.' He thought he had already said too much. 'A passion, in short,' added he, with an altered tone, 'that consumes me away for my pretty Fanny here,

and she is very cruel,' speaking of another lady (Miss Burney) in the room."

These peculiarities throw light on more questions than one relating to Johnson's prolonged intimacy with Mrs. Thrale. His gallantry, and the flattering air of deferential tenderness which he knew how to throw into his commerce with his female favourities, may have had little less to do with his domestication at Streatham than his celebrity, his learning, or his wit. The most submissive wife will manage to dislodge an inmate who is displeasing to her. "Aye, a marriage, man," said Bucklaw to his led captain, "but wherefore droops thy mighty spirit? The board will have a corner, and the corner will have a trencher, and the trencher will have a glass beside it; and the board end shall be filled, and the trencher and the glass shall be replenished for thee, if all the petticoats in Lothian had sworn the contrary." "So says many an honest fellow," said Craigenfelt, "and some of my special friends; but curse me, if I know the reason, the women could never bear me, and always contrived to trundle me out before the honeymoon was over."

It was all very well for Johnson to tell Boswell, "I know no man who is more master of his wife and family than Thrale. If he holds up a finger he is obeyed." The sage took very good care not to act upon the theory, and instead of treating the wife as a cipher, lost no opportunity of paying court to her, though in a manner quite compatible with his own lofty spirit of independence and self-respect. Thus, attention having

been called to some Italian verses by Baretti, he converted them into an elegant compliment to her by an improvised paraphrase:

"Viva! viva la padrona!
Tutta bella, e tutta buona,
La padrona e un angiolella
Tutta buona e tutta bella;
Tutta bella e tutta buona;
Viva! viva la padrona!"

"Long may live my lovely Hetty!
Always young and always pretty,
Always pretty, always young,
Live my lovely Hetty long!
Always young and always pretty;
Long may live my lovely Hetty!"

Her marginal note in the copy of the "Anecdotes" presented by her to Sir James Fellowes in 1816 is:— "I heard these verses sung at Mr. Thomas's by three voices, not three weeks ago."

It was in the eighth year of their acquaintance that Johnson solaced his fatigue in the Hebrides by writing a Latin ode to her. "About fourteen years since," wrote Sir Walter Scott, in 1829, "I landed in Sky with a party of friends, and had the curiosity to ask what was the first idea on every one's mind at landing. All answered separately that it was this ode." Thinking Miss Cornelia Knight's version too diffuse, I asked Mr. Milnes for a translation or paraphrase, and he kindly complied by producing these spirited stanzas:—

"Where constant mist enshrouds the rocks,
Shattered in earth's primeval shocks,
And niggard Nature ever mocks
The labourer's toil,

I roam through clans of savage men,
Untamed by arts, untaught by pen;
Or cower within some squalid den
O'er reeking soil.

Through paths that halt from stone to stone,
Amid the din of tongues unknown,
One image haunts my soul alone,
Thine, gentle Thrale!

Soothes she, I ask, her spouse's care?
Does mother-love its charge prepare?
Stores she her mind with knowledge rare,
Or lively tale?

Forget me not! thy faith I claim,
Holding a faith that cannot die,
That fills with thy benignant name
These shores of Sky."

"On another occasion," says Mrs. Thrale, in the "Anecdotes," "I can boast verses from Dr. Johnson. As I went into his room the morning of my birthday once and said to him, 'Nobody sends me any verses now, because I am five-and-thirty years old; and Stella was fed with them till forty-six, I remember.' My being just recovered from illness and confinement will account for the manner in which he burst out suddenly, for so he did without the least previous hesitation whatsoever, and without having entertained the smallest intention towards it half a minute before: —

"'Oft in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five;
Long may better years arrive,
Better years than thirty-five.
Could philosophers contrive
Life to stop at thirty-five,

Time his hours should never drive
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
High to soar, and deep to dive,
Nature gives at thirty-five.
Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five;
For howe'er we boast and strive,
Life declines from thirty-five:
He that ever hopes to thrive
Must begin by thirty-five;
And all who wisely wish to wive
Must look on Thrale at thirty-five.'

"'And now,' said he, as I was writing them down, 'you may see what it is to come for poetry to a dictionary-maker; you may observe that the rhymes run in alphabetical order exactly.' And so they do."

Byron's estimate of life at the same age, is somewhat different:

"Too old for youth — too young, at thirty-five
To herd with boys, or hoard with good threescore,
I wonder people should be left alive.
But since they are, that epoch is a bore."

Lady Aldborough, whose best witticisms unluckily lie under the same merited ban as Rochester's best verses, resolved not to pass twenty-five, and had her passport made out accordingly till her death at eighty-five. She used to boast that, whenever a foreign official objected, she never failed to silence him by the remark, that he was the first gentleman of his country who ever told a lady she was older than she said she was. Actuated probably by a similar feeling, and in the hope of securing to herself the benefit of the doubt, Mrs.

Thrale omitted in the "Anecdotes" the year when these verses were addressed to her, and a sharp controversy has been raised as to the respective ages of herself and Dr. Johnson at the time. It is thus summed up by one of the combatants:

"In one place Mr. Croker says that at the commencement of the intimacy between Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, in 1765, the lady was twenty-five years old. In other places he says that Mrs. Thrale's thirty-fifth year coincided with Johnson's seventieth. Johnson was born in 1709. If, therefore, Mrs. Thrale's thirty-fifth year coincided with Johnson's seventieth, she could have been only twenty-one years old in 1765. This is not all. Mr. Croker, in another place, assigns the year 1777 as the date of the complimentary lines which Johnson made on Mrs. Thrale's thirty-fifth birthday. If this date be correct Mrs. Thrale must have been born in 1742, and could have been only twenty-three when her acquaintance commenced. Mr. Croker, therefore, gives us three different statements as to her age. Two of the three must be incorrect. We will not decide between them." *

"At the time of my first edition," rejoins Mr. Croker, "I was unable to ascertain precisely Mrs. Piozzi's age, but a subsequent publication, named "Piozziana," fixes her birth on her own authority to the 16th January, 1740; yet even that is not quite conclusive, for she calls it 1740 old style, that is 1741. I must now, of course, adopt, though not without some doubt, the lady's

* Macaulay's Essays.

reckoning." The difficulty, such as it is, arises from her not particularising the style. In a letter to the author of "Piozziana," dated January 15th, 1817, she writes: "I am not well; nor, I fear, going to be well directly; but, be it as it may, to-morrow is my seventy-sixth anniversary, and I ought to be happy and thankful." The author's comment is: "In this letter she marks her birthday and her advanced age, seventy-seven; and much about that time, I recollect her showing me a valuable china bowl, in the inside of which was pasted a slip of paper, and on it written, 'With this bowl Hester Lynch Salusbury was baptized, 1740.' She was born on the 16th or, as according to the change of style, we should now reckon the 27th, of January, 1741."

In a letter to Mrs. Thrale of August 14th, 1780, Johnson writes: "If you try to plague me, I shall tell you that, according to Galen, life begins to decline at thirty-five." This gives Mr. Croker a pretext for returning to the topic: "Mrs. Piozzi at her last birthday must have been forty, so that Johnson must have alluded to the sprightly verses in which he had celebrated Mrs. Thrale at thirty-five (see *antè*, p. 170, n. 3, and p. 471, n. 3.*); but since these notes were written I have found evidence under her own hand that my suspicion was just, and that she was born in 1740, new style." He does not state where or in what shape this

* The references are to the handsome and complete edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson," in one volume, royal octavo, published by Mr. Murray in 1860.

evidence was found. It coincides with her letter of January 15th, 1817; but is irreconcilable with the slip of paper in the bowl, which we learn from her letters was pasted in by herself after her second marriage.

"This bowl," writes Mr. Salusbury, "is now in my possession. The slip of paper now in it is in my father's handwriting, and copied, I have heard him say, from the original slip, which was worn out by age and fingering. The exact words are, 'In this bason was baptized Hester Lynch Salusbury, 16th Jan. 1740-41 old style, at Bodville in Carnarvonshire.'"

The incident of the verses is thus narrated in "Thraliana": "And this year, 1777, when I told him that it was my birthday, and that I was then thirty-five years old, he repeated me these verses, which I wrote down from his mouth as he made them." If she was born in 1740-41, she must have been thirty-six in 1777; and there is no perfectly satisfactory settlement of the controversy, which many will think derives its sole importance from the two chief controversialists, for it is eminently characteristic of both of them.

The highest authorities differ equally about her looks. "My readers," says Boswell, "will naturally wish for some representation of the figures of this couple. Mr. Thrale was tall, well-proportioned, and stately. As for *Madam*, or *My Mistress*, by which epithets Johnson used to mention Mrs. Thrale, she was short, plump, and brisk." "He should have added," observes Mr. Croker, "that she was very pretty." This was not her own opinion, nor that of her cotemporaries, al-

though her face was attractive from animation and expression, and her personal appearance pleasing on the whole. Sometimes, when visiting the author of "Piozziana," * she used to look at her little self, as she called it, and spoke drolly of what she once was, as if speaking of some one else; and one day, turning to him, she exclaimed: "No, I never was handsome: I had always too many strong points in my face for beauty." On his expressing a doubt of this, and hinting that Dr. Johnson was certainly an admirer of her personal charms, she replied that his devotion was at least as warm towards the table and the table-cloth at Streatham.

One day when he was ill, exceedingly low-spirited, and persuaded that death was not far distant, she appeared before him in a dark-coloured gown, which his bad sight, and worse apprehensions, made him mistake for an iron-grey. "'Why do you delight,' said he, 'thus to thicken the gloom of misery that surrounds me? is not here sufficient accumulation of horror without anticipated mourning?'—'This is not mourning, Sir!' said I, drawing the curtain, that the light might fall upon the silk, and show it was a purple mixed with green.—'Well, well!' replied he, changing his voice; 'you little creatures should never wear those

* "Piozziana; or Recollections of the late Mrs. Piozzi, with Remarks. By a Friend." Moxon. 1833. These reminiscences, unluckily limited to the last eight or ten years of her life at Bath, contain much curious information, and leave a highly favourable impression of Mrs. Piozzi.

sort of clothes, however, they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colours?'"

According to the author of "Piozziana," who became acquainted with her late in life, "She was short, and though well-proportioned, broad, and deep-chested. Her hands were muscular and almost coarse, but her writing was, even in her eightieth year, exquisitely beautiful; and one day, while conversing with her on the subject of education, she observed that 'all Misses now-a-days, wrote so like each other, that it was provoking;' adding, 'I love to see individuality of character, and abhor sameness, especially in what is feeble and flimsy.' Then, spreading her hand, she said, 'I believe I owe what you are pleased to call my good writing, to the shape of this hand, for my uncle, Sir Robert Cotton, thought it was too manly to be employed in writing like a boarding school girl; and so I came by my vigorous, black manuscript.'"

It was fortunate that the hand-writing compensated for the hands; and as she attached great importance to blood and race, that she did not live to read Byron's "thoroughbred and tapering fingers," or to be shocked by his theory that "the hand is almost the only sign of blood which aristocracy can generate." Her Bath friend appeals to a miniature (engraved for this work) by Roche, of Bath, taken when she was in her seventy-seventh year. Like Cromwell, who told the painter that if he softened a harsh line, or so much as omitted a wart, he should never be paid a sixpence, — she desired the artist to paint her face deeply

rouged, which it always was*, and to introduce a trivial deformity of the jaw, produced by a horse treading on her as she lay on the ground after a fall. In this respect she proved superior to Johnson; who, with all his love of truth, could not bear to be painted with his defects. He was displeased at being drawn holding a book close to his eye, and on its being suggested that Reynolds had painted himself with his ear-trumpet, he replied: "He may do as he likes, but I will not go down to posterity as Blinking Sam."

Reynolds' portrait of Mrs. Thrale conveys a highly agreeable impression of her; and so does Hogarth's when she sat to him for the principal figure in "The Lady's Last Stake." She was then only fourteen; and he probably idealised his model; but that he also produced a striking likeness, is obvious on comparing his

* "One day I called early at her house; and as I entered her drawing-room, she passed me, saying 'Dear Sir, I will be with you in a few minutes; but, while I think of it, I must go to my dressing-closet and paint my face, which I forgot to do this morning.' Accordingly she soon returned, wearing the requisite quantity of bloom; which, it must be noticed, was not in the least like that of youth and beauty. I then said that I was surprised she should so far sacrifice to fashion, as to take that trouble. Her answer was that, as I might conclude, her practice of painting did not proceed from any silly compliance with Bath fashion, or any fashion; still less, if possible, from the desire of appearing younger than she was, but from this circumstance, that in early life she had worn rouge, as other young persons did in her day, as a part of dress; and after continuing the habit for some years, discovered that it had introduced a dead yellow colour into her complexion, quite unlike that of her natural skin, and that she wished to conceal the deformity."—*Piozziana.*

picture with the professed portraits. The history of this picture (which has been engraved, at Lord Macaulay's suggestion, for this work) will be found in the Autobiography and the Letters.

Boswell's account of his first visit to Streatham gives a tolerably fair notion of the footing on which Johnson stood there, and the manner in which the interchange of mind was carried on between him and the hostess: This visit took place in October, 1769, four or five years after Johnson's introduction to her; and Boswell's absence from London, in which he had no fixed residence during Johnson's life, will hardly account for the neglect of his illustrious friend in not procuring him a privilege which he must have highly coveted and would doubtless have turned to good account.

"On the 6th of October I complied with this obliging invitation; and found, at an elegant villa, six miles from town, every circumstance that can make society pleasing. Johnson, though quite at home, was yet looked up to with an awe, tempered by affection, and seemed to be equally the care of his host and hostess. I rejoiced at seeing him so happy."

"Mrs. Thrale disputed with him on the merit of Prior. He attacked him powerfully; said he wrote of love like a man who had never felt it; his love verses were college verses: and he repeated the song, 'Alexis shunn'd his fellow swains,' &c. in so ludicrous a manner, as to make us all wonder how any one could have been pleased with such fantastical stuff. Mrs. Thrale stood

to her guns with great courage, in defence of amorous ditties, which Johnson despised, till he at last silenced her by saying, 'My dear lady, talk no more of this. Nonsense can be defended but by nonsense.'

"Mrs. Thrale then praised Garrick's talents for light gay poetry; and, as a specimen, repeated his song in 'Florizel and Perdita,' and dwelt with peculiar pleasure on this line: —

"'I'd smile with the simple, and feed with the poor.'

"*Johnson.*—'Nay, my dear lady, this will never do. Poor David! Smile with the simple! — what folly is that? And who would feed with the poor that can help it? No, no; let me smile with the wise, and feed with the rich.'" Boswell adds, that he repeated this sally to Garrick, and wondered to find his sensibility as a writer not a little irritated by it; on which Mrs. Thrale remarks, "How odd to go and tell the man!"

The independent tone she took when she deemed the Doctor unreasonable, is also proved by Boswell in his report of what took place at Streatham in reference to Lord Marchmont's offer to supply information for the Life of Pope.

"Elated with the success of my spontaneous exertion to procure material and respectable aid to Johnson for his very favourite work, 'the Lives of the Poets,' I hastened down to Mr. Thrale's, at Streatham, where he now was, that I might insure his being at home next day; and after dinner, when I thought he would receive

the good news in the best humour, I announced it eagerly: 'I have been at work for you to-day, Sir. I have been with Lord Marchmont. He bade me tell you he has a great respect for you, and will call on you to-morrow at one o'clock, and communicate all he knows about Pope.' *Johnson.* 'I shall not be in town to-morrow. I don't care to know about Pope.' *Mrs. Thrale* (surprised, as I was, and a little angry). 'I suppose, Sir, Mr. Boswell thought that as you are to write Pope's Life, you would wish to know about him.' *Johnson.* 'Wish! why yes. If it rained knowledge, I'd hold out my hand; but I would not give myself the trouble to go in quest of it.' There was no arguing with him at the moment. Some time afterwards he said, 'Lord Marchmont will call on me, and then I shall call on Lord Marchmont.' Mrs. Thrale was uneasy at this unaccountable caprice; and told me, that if I did not take care to bring about a meeting between Lord Marchmont and him, it would never take place, which would be a great pity."

The ensuing conversation is a good sample of the freedom and variety of "talk" in which Johnson luxuriated, and shows how important a part Mrs. Thrale played in it:

"Mrs. Thrale told us, that a curious clergyman of our acquaintance (Dr. Lort is named in the margin) had discovered a licentious stanza, which Pope had originally in his 'Universal Prayer,' before the stanza,—

> "'What conscience dictates to be done,
> Or warns us not to do,' &c.

It was this:—

"'Can sins of moment claim the rod
Of everlasting fires?
And that offend great Nature's God
Which Nature's self inspires?'

and that Dr. Johnson observed, it had been borrowed from *Guarini*. There are, indeed, in *Pastor Fido*, many such flimsy superficial reasonings as that in the last two lines of this stanza.

"*Boswell.* 'In that stanza of Pope's, "*rod of fires*" is certainly a bad metaphor.' *Mrs. Thrale.* 'And "sins of *moment*" is a faulty expression; for its true import is *momentous*, which cannot be intended.' *Johnson.* 'It must have been written "of *moments*." Of *moment*, is *momentous;* of *moments*, *momentary*. I warrant you, however, Pope wrote this stanza, and some friend struck it out.'

"Talking of divorces, I asked if Othello's doctrine was not plausible:—

"'He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.'

Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale joined against this. *Johnson.* 'Ask any man if he'd wish not to know of such an injury.' *Boswell.* 'Would you tell your friend to make him unhappy?' *Johnson.* 'Perhaps, Sir, I should not: but that would be from prudence on my own account. A man would tell his father.' *Boswell.* 'Yes; because he would not have spurious children to get any share of the family inheritance.' *Mrs. Thrale.* 'Or he would tell his brother.' *Boswell.* 'Certainly

his *elder* brother. . . . Would you tell Mr. ——?' (naming a gentleman who assuredly was not in the least danger of so miserable a disgrace, though married to a fine woman). *Johnson.* 'No, Sir: because it would do no good; he is so sluggish, he'd never go to Parliament and get through a divorce.'" *Marginal Note:* "Langton."

One great charm of her companionship to cultivated men was her familiarity with the learned languages, as well as with French, Italian, and Spanish. The author of "Piozziana" says: "She not only read and wrote Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, but had for sixty years constantly and ardently studied the Scriptures and the works of commentators in the original languages." He probably over-estimated her acquirements, which Boswell certainly under-estimates when he speaks slightingly of them on the strength of Johnson's having said: "It is a great mistake to suppose that she is above him (Thrale) in literary attainments. She is more flippant, but he has ten times her learning: he is a regular scholar; but her learning is that of a school-boy in one of the lower forms." If this were so, it is strange that Thrale should cut so poor a figure, should seem little better than a nonentity, whilst every imaginable topic was under animated discussion at his table; for Boswell was more ready to report the husband's sayings than the wife's. In a marginal note on one of the printed letters she says: "Mr. Thrale was a very merry talking man in 1760; but the distress of 1772, which affected his

health, his hopes, and his whole soul, affected his temper too. Perkins called it being planet struck, and I am not sure he was ever completely the same man again." The notes of his conversation during the antecedent period are equally meagre.

No one would have expected to find her as much at home in Greek and Latin authors as a man of fair ability who had received and profited by an University education, but she could appreciate a classical allusion or quotation, and translate off-hand a Latin epigram into idiomatic English.

"Mary Aston," said Johnson, "was a beauty and a scholar, and a wit and a whig; and she talked all in praise of liberty; and so I made this epigram upon her. She was the loveliest creature I ever saw!

"'Liber ne esse velim, suasisti, pulchra Maria,
Ut maneam liber, pulchra Maria, vale!'

"Will it do this way in English, Sir? (said Mrs. Thrale) —

"'Persuasions to freedom fall oddly from you,
If freedom we seek, fair Maria, adieu.'

Mr. Croker's version is: —

"'You wish me, fair Maria, to be free,
Then, fair Maria, I must fly from thee.'

Boswell also has tried his hand at it; and a correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine" suggests that Johnson had in his mind an epigram on a young lady who appeared at a masquerade in Paris, habited as a

Jesuit, during the height of the contention between the Jansenists and Molinists concerning free will:—

"On s'étonne ici que Calviniste
Eût pris l'habit de Moliniste,
Puisque que cette jeune beauté
Ôte à chacun sa liberté,
N'est ce pas une Janséniste." *

Mrs. Thrale took the lead even when her husband might be expected to strike in, as when Johnson was declaiming paradoxically against action in oratory: "Action can have no effect on reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it never can enforce argument." *Mrs. Thrale.* "What then, Sir, becomes of Demosthenes' saying, Action, action, action?" *Johnson.* "Demosthenes, Madam, spoke to an assembly of brutes, to a barbarous people." "The polished Athenians!" is her marginal protest, and a most conclusive one.

In English literature she was rarely at fault. In reference to the flattery lavished on Garrick by Lord Mansfield and Lord Chatham, Johnson had said, "When he whom everybody else flatters, flatters me, then I am truly happy." *Mrs. Thrale.* "The sentiment is in

* "Menagiana," vol. iii. p. 376. Edition of 1716. Equally happy were Lord Chesterfield's lines to a young lady who appeared at a Dublin ball, with an orange breastknot:—

"Pretty Tory, where's the jest
To wear that riband on thy breast,
When that same breast betraying shows
The whiteness of the rebel rose?"

White was adopted by the malcontent Irish of the period as the French emblem.

Congreve, I think." *Johnson.* "Yes, Madam, in 'The Way of the World.'

> "'If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
> The heart that others bleed for, bleed for me.'"

The *laudari a laudato viro* is nearer the mark.

It would be easy to heap proof upon proof of the value and variety of Mrs. Thrale's contributions to the colloquial treasures accumulated by Boswell and other members of the set; and Johnson's deliberate testimony to her good qualities of head and heart will far more than counterbalance any passing expressions of disapproval or reproof which her mistimed vivacity, or alleged disregard of scrupulous accuracy in narrative, may have called forth. No two people ever lived much together for a series of years without many fretful, complaining, dissatisfied, uncongenial moments, — without letting drop captious or unkind expressions utterly at variance with their habitual feelings and their matured judgments of each other. The hasty word, the passing sarcasm, the sly hit at an acknowledged foible, should count for nothing in the estimate when contrasted with earnest and deliberate assurances, proceeding from one who was always too proud to flatter, and in no mood for idle compliment when he wrote:

"Never (he writes in 1773) imagine that your letters are long; they are always too short for my curiosity. I do not know that I was ever content with a single perusal. . . . My nights are grown again very uneasy and troublesome. I know not that the country will mend them;

but I hope your company will mend my days. Though I cannot now expect much attention, and would not wish for more than can be spared from the poor dear lady (her mother), yet I shall see you and hear you every now and then; and to see and hear you, is always to hear wit, and to see virtue."

He would not suffer her to be lightly spoken of in his presence, nor permit his name to be coupled jocularly with hers. "I yesterday told him," says Boswell, when they were traversing the Highlands, "I was thinking of writing a poetical letter to him, on his return from Scotland, in the style of Swift's humorous epistle in the character of Mary Gulliver to her husband, Captain Lemuel Gulliver, on his return to England from the country of the Houyhnhnms:—

"'At early morn I to the market haste,
Studious in ev'ry thing to please thy taste.
A curious *fowl* and *sparagrass* I chose;
(For I remember you were fond of those:)
Three shillings cost the first, the last seven groats;
Sullen you turn from both, and call for OATS.'

He laughed, and asked in whose name I would write it. I said in Mrs. Thrale's. He was angry. 'Sir, if you have any sense of decency or delicacy, you won't do that.' *Boswell.* 'Then let it be in Cole's, the landlord of the Mitre tavern, where we have so often sat together.' *Johnson.* 'Ay, that may do.'"

Again, at Inverary, when Johnson called for a gill of whiskey that he might know what makes a Scotchman happy, and Boswell proposed Mrs. Thrale as their toast,

he would not have *her* drunk in whiskey. Peter Pindar has maliciously added to this reproof:—

> "We supped most royally, were vastly frisky,
> When Johnson ordered up a gill of whiskey.
> Taking the glass, says I, 'Here's Mistress Thrale,'
> 'Drink her in *whiskey* not,' said he, 'but *ale*.'"

So far from making light of her scholarship, he frequently accepted her as a partner in translations from the Latin. The translations from Boethius, printed in the second volume of the Letters, are their joint composition.

After recapitulating Johnson's other contributions to literature in 1766, Boswell says "'The Fountains,' a beautiful little fairy tale in prose, written with exquisite simplicity, is one of Johnson's productions; and *I cannot withhold* from Mrs. Thrale the praise of being the author of that admirable poem 'The Three Warnings.'" *Marginal note:* "How sorry he is!" Both the tale and the poem were written for a collection of "Miscellanies," published by Mrs. Williams in that year. The character of Floretta in "The Fountains" was intended for Mrs. Thrale, and parts of it received touches from her ready and fruitful pen. Her fugitive pieces, mostly in verse, thrown off from time to time at all periods of her life, are numerous; and the best of these that have been recovered will be included in these volumes. In a letter to the author of "Piozziana," she says:—"When Wilkes and Liberty were at their highest tide, I was bringing or losing children every year; and my studies were confined to

my nursery; so, it came into my head one day to send an infant alphabet to the 'St. James Chronicle': —

"'A was an Alderman, factious and proud;
B was a Bellas that blustered aloud, &c.'

"In a week's time Dr. Johnson asked me if I knew who wrote it? 'Why, who did write it, Sir?' said I. 'Steevens,' was the reply. Some time after that, years for aught I know, he mentioned to me Steevens's veracity! 'No, no;' answered H. L. P., 'anything but that;' and told my story; showing him by incontestable proofs that it was mine. Johnson did not utter a word, and we never talked about it any more. I durst not introduce the subject; but it served to hinder S. from visiting at the house: I suppose Johnson kept him away."

It does not appear that Steevens claimed the Alphabet; which may have suggested the celebrated squib that appeared in the "New Whig Guide," and was popularly attributed to Mr. Croker. It was headed "The Political Alphabet; or, the Young Member's A B C," and begins:

"A was an Althorpe, as dull as a hog:
B was black Brougham, a surly cur dog:
C was a Cochrane, all stripped of his lace."

What widely different associations are now awakened by these names! The sting is in the tail:

"W was a Warre, 'twixt a wasp and a worm,
But X Y and Z are not found in this form,
Unless Moore, Martin, and Creevey be said
(As the last of mankind) to be X Y and Z."

Amongst Miss Reynolds' "Recollections" will be found:—"On the praises of Mrs. Thrale he (Johnson) used to dwell with a peculiar delight, a paternal fondness, expressive of conscious exultation in being so intimately acquainted with her. One day, in speaking of her to Mr. Harris, author of 'Hermes,' and expatiating on her various perfections,—the solidity of her virtues, the brilliancy of her wit, and the strength of her understanding, &c.—he quoted some lines (a stanza, I believe, but from what author I know not), with which he concluded his most eloquent eulogium, and of these I retained but the two last lines:—

'Virtues—of such a generous kind,
Good in the last recesses of the mind.'"

The place assigned to Mrs. Thrale by the popular voice amongst the most cultivated and accomplished women of the day, is fixed by some verses printed in the "Morning Herald" of March 12th, 1782, which attracted much attention. They were commonly attributed to Mr. (afterwards Sir W. W.) Pepys, and Madame d'Arblay, who alludes to them complacently, thought them his; but he subsequently repudiated the authorship, and the editor of her Memoirs believes that they were written by Dr. Burney. They were provoked by the proneness of the Herald to indulge in complimentary allusions to ladies of the demirep genus:—

"Herald, wherefore thus proclaim
Nought of woman but the *shame?*
Quit, oh, quit, at least awhile,
Perdita's too luscious smile;

Wanton Worsley, stilted Daly,
Heroines of each blackguard alley;
Better sure record in story
Such as shine their sex's glory!
Herald! haste, with me proclaim
Those of literary fame.
Hannah More's pathetic pen,
Painting high th' impassion'd scene;
Carter's piety and learning,
Little Burney's quick discerning;
Cowley's neatly pointed wit,
Healing those her satires hit;
Smiling Streatfield's ivory neck,
Nose, and notions — *à la Grecque!*
Let Chaponè retain a place,
And the mother of her Grace,
Each art of conversation knowing,
High-bred, elegant Boscawen;
Thrale, in whose expressive eyes
Sits a soul above disguise,
Skill'd with wit and sense t' impart
Feelings of a generous heart.
Lucan, Leveson, Greville, Crewe;
Fertile-minded Montague,
Who makes each rising art her care,
'And brings her knowledge from afar!'
Whilst her tuneful tongue defends
Authors dead, and absent friends;
Bright in genius, pure in fame:—
Herald, haste, and these proclaim!"

These lines merit attention for the sake of the comparison they invite. An outcry has recently been raised against the laxity of modern fashion, in permitting venal beauty to receive open homage in our parks and theatres, and to be made the subject of prurient gossip by maids and matrons who should ignore its existence. But we

need not look far beneath the surface of social history to discover that the irregularity in question is only a partial revival of the practice of our grandfathers and grandmothers, much as a crinoline may be regarded as a modified reproduction of the hoop. Junius thus denounces the Duke of Grafton's indecorous devotion to Nancy Parsons: "It is not the private indulgence, but the public insult, of which I complain. The name of Miss Parsons would hardly have been known, if the First Lord of the Treasury had not led her in triumph through the Opera House, even in the presence of the Queen." Lord March (afterwards Duke of Queensberry) was a lord of the bedchamber in the decorous court of George the Third, when he wrote thus to Selwyn: "I was prevented from writing to you last Friday, by being at Newmarket with my little girl (Signora Zamperini, a noted dancer and singer). I had the whole family and Cocchi. The beauty went with me in my chaise, and the rest in the old landau."

We have had Boswell's impression of his first visit to Streatham; and Madame D'Arblay's account of hers confirms the notion that My Mistress, not My Master, was the presiding genius of the place.

"*London, August* (1778).—I have now to write an account of the most consequential day I have spent since my birth: namely, my Streatham visit.

"Our journey to Streatham was the least pleasant part of the day, for the roads were dreadfully dusty, and I was really in the fidgets from thinking what my reception might be, and from fearing they would expect

a less awkward and backward kind of person than I was sure they would find.

"Mr. Thrale's house is white, and very pleasantly situated, in a fine paddock. Mrs. Thrale was strolling about, and came to us as we got out of the chaise.

"She then received me, taking both my hands, and with mixed politeness and cordiality welcoming me to Streatham. She led me into the house, and addressed herself almost wholly for a few minutes to my father, as if to give me an assurance she did not mean to regard me as a show, or to distress or frighten me by drawing me out. Afterwards she took me up stairs, and showed me the house, and said she had very much wished to see me at Streatham, and should always think herself much obliged to Dr. Burney for his goodness in bringing me, which she looked upon as a very great favour.

"But though we were some time together, and though she was so very civil, she did not *hint* at my book, and I love her much more than ever for her delicacy in avoiding a subject which she could not but see would have greatly embarrassed me.

"When we returned to the music-room, we found Miss Thrale was with my father. Miss Thrale is a very fine girl, about fourteen years of age, but cold and reserved, though full of knowledge and intelligence.

"Soon after, Mrs. Thrale took me to the library; she talked a little while upon common topics, and then, at last, she mentioned 'Evelina.'

"I now prevailed upon Mrs. Thrale to let me amuse myself, and she went to dress. I then prowled about

to choose some book, and I saw, upon the reading-table, 'Evelina.' I had just fixed upon a new translation of Cicero's 'Lælius,' when the library door was opened, and Mr. Seward entered. I instantly put away my book, because I dreaded being thought studious and affected. He offered his service to find anything for me, and then, in the same breath, ran on to speak of the book with which I had myself 'favoured the world!'

"The exact words he began with I cannot recollect, for I was actually confounded by the attack; and his abrupt manner of letting me know he was *au fait* equally astonished and provoked me. How different from the delicacy of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale!"

A high French authority has laid down that politeness or good breeding consists in rendering to all what is socially their due. This definition is imperfect. Good breeding is best displayed by putting people at their ease; and Mrs. Thrale's manner of putting the young authoress at her ease was the perfection of delicacy and tact.

If Johnson's entrance on the stage had been premeditated, it could hardly have been more dramatically ordered.

"When we were summoned to dinner, Mrs. Thrale made my father and me sit on each side of her. I said that I hoped I did not take Dr. Johnson's place; — for he had not yet appeared.

"'No,' answered Mrs. Thrale, 'he will sit by you, which I am sure will give him great pleasure.'

"Soon after we were seated, this great man entered. I have so true a veneration for him, that the very sight of him inspires me with delight and reverence, notwithstanding the cruel infirmities to which he is subject; for he has almost perpetual convulsive movements, either of his hands, lips, feet, or knees, and sometimes of all together.

"Mrs. Thrale introduced me to him, and he took his place. We had a noble dinner, and a most elegant dessert. Dr. Johnson, in the middle of dinner, asked Mrs. Thrale what was in some little pies that were near him.

"'Mutton,' answered she, 'so I don't ask you to eat any, because I know you despise it.'

"'No, Madam, no,' cried he; 'I despise nothing that is good of its sort; but I am too proud now to eat of it. Sitting by Miss Burney makes me very proud to-day!'

"'Miss Burney,' said Mrs. Thrale, laughing, 'you must take great care of your heart if Dr. Johnson attacks it; for I assure you he is not often successless.'

"'What's that you say, Madam?' cried he; 'are you making mischief between the young lady and me already?'

"A little while after he drank Miss Thrale's health and mine, and then added:

"'Tis a terrible thing that we cannot wish young ladies well, without wishing them to become old women.'"

Madame D'Arblay's memoirs are sadly defaced by

egotism, and gratified vanity may have had a good deal to do with her unqualified admiration of Mrs. Thrale, for "Evelina" (recently published) was the unceasing topic of exaggerated eulogy during the entire visit. Still so acute an observer could not be essentially wrong in an account of her reception, which is in the highest degree favourable to her newly acquired friend. Of her second visit she says:

"Our journey was charming. The kind Mrs. Thrale would give courage to the most timid. She did not ask me questions, or catechise me upon what I knew, or use any means to draw me out, but made it her business to draw herself out — that is, to start subjects, to support them herself, and take all the weight of the conversation, as if it behoved her to find me entertainment. But I am so much in love with her, that I shall be obliged to run away from the subject, or shall write of nothing else.

"When we arrived here, Mrs. Thrale showed me my room, which is an exceeding pleasant one, and then conducted me to the library, there to divert myself while she dressed.

"Miss Thrale soon joined me: and I begin to like her. Mr. Thrale was neither well nor in spirits all day. Indeed, he seems not to be a happy man, though he has every means of happiness in his power. But I think I have rarely seen a very rich man with a light heart and light spirits."

The concluding remark, coming from such a source, may supply an improving subject of meditation or

inquiry; if found true, it may help to suppress envy and promote contentment. Thrale's state of health, however, accounts for his depression independently of his wealth, which rested on too precarious a foundation to allow of unbroken confidence and gaiety.

"At tea (continues the diarist) we all met again, and Dr. Johnson was gaily sociable. He gave a very droll account of the children of Mr. Langton.

"'Who,' he said, 'might be very good children if they were let alone; but the father is never easy when he is not making them do something which they cannot do; they must repeat a fable, or a speech, or the Hebrew alphabet; and they might as well count twenty, for what they know of the matter: however, the father says half, for he prompts every other word. But he could not have chosen a man who would have been less entertained by such means.'

"'I believe not!' cried Mrs. Thrale: 'nothing is more ridiculous than parents cramming their children's nonsense down other people's throats. I keep mine as much out of the way as I can.'

"'Yours, Madam,' answered he, 'are in nobody's way; no children can be better managed or less troublesome; but your fault is, a too great perverseness in not allowing anybody to give them anything. Why should they not have a cherry, or a gooseberry, as well as bigger children?'

"Indeed, the freedom with which Dr. Johnson condemns whatever he disapproves, is astonishing; and the strength of words he uses would, to most people, be

intolerable; but Mrs. Thrale seems to have a sweetness of disposition that equals all her other excellences, and far from making a point of vindicating herself, she generally receives his admonitions with the most respectful silence.

"But I fear to say all I think at present of Mrs. Thrale, lest some flaws should appear by-and-bye, that may make me think differently. And yet, why should I not indulge the *now*, as well as the *then*, since it will be with so much more pleasure? In short, I do think her delightful; she has talents to create admiration, good humour to excite love, understanding to give entertainment, and a heart which, like my dear father's, seems already fitted for another world."

Another of the conversations which occurred during this visit is characteristic of all parties: —

"I could not help expressing my amazement at his universal readiness upon all subjects, and Mrs. Thrale said to him,

"'Sir, Miss Burney wonders at your patience with such stuff; but I tell her you are used to me, for I believe I torment you with more foolish questions than anybody else dares do.'

"'No, Madam,' said he, 'you don't torment me; — you teaze me, indeed, sometimes.'

"'Ay, so I do, Dr. Johnson, and I wonder you bear with my nonsense.'

"'No, Madam, you never talk nonsense; you have as much sense, and more wit, than any woman I know!'

"'Oh,' cried Mrs. Thrale, blushing, 'it is my turn to go under the table this morning, Miss Burney!'

"'And yet,' continued the Doctor, with the most comical look, 'I have known all the wits, from Mrs. Montagu down to Bet Flint!'

"'Bet Flint!' cried Mrs. Thrale; 'pray who is she?'

"'Oh, a fine character, Madam! She was habitually a slut and a drunkard, and occasionally a thief and a harlot.'

"'And, for Heaven's sake, how came you to know her?'

"'Why, Madam, she figured in the literary world, too! Bet Flint wrote her own life, and called herself Cassandra, and it was in verse. So Bet brought me her verses to correct; but I gave her half-a-crown, and she liked it as well.'

"'And pray what became of her, Sir?'

"'Why, Madam, she stole a quilt from the man of the house, and he had her taken up: but Bet Flint had a spirit not to be subdued; so when she found herself obliged to go to jail, she ordered a sedan chair, and bid her footboy walk before her. However, the boy proved refractory, for he was ashamed, though his mistress was not.'

"'And did she ever get out of jail again, Sir?'

"'Yes, Madam; when she came to her trial, the judge acquitted her. "So now," she said to me, "the quilt is my own, and now I'll make a petticoat of it."* Oh, I loved Bet Flint!'

* This story is told by Boswell, roy. 8vo. edit. p. 688.

"'Bless me, Sir;' cried Mrs. Thrale, 'how can all these vagabonds contrive to get at *you*, of all people?'

"'O the dear creatures!' cried he, laughing heartily, 'I can't but be glad to see them!'".

Madame D'Arblay's notes of the conversation and mode of life at Streatham are full and spirited, and exhibit Johnson in moods and situations in which he was seldom seen by Boswell. The adroitness with which he divided his attentions amongst the ladies, blending approval with instruction, and softening contradiction or reproof by gallantry, gives plausibility to his otherwise paradoxical claim to be considered a polite man.* He obviously knew how to set about it, and (theoretically at least) was no mean proficient in that art of pleasing which attracts

> "Rather by deference than compliment,
> And wins e'en by a delicate dissent."

Sir Henry Bulwer (in his "France") says that Louis the Fourteenth was entitled to be called a man of

* "When the company were retired, we happened to be talking of Dr. Barnard, the provost of Eton, who died about that time; and after a long and just eulogium on his wit, his learning, and goodness of heart—'He was the only man, too,' says Mr. Johnson quite seriously, 'that did justice to my good breeding; and you may observe that I am well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity. No man,' continued he, not observing the amazement of his hearers, 'no man is so cautious not to interrupt another; no man thinks it so necessary to appear attentive when others are speaking; no man so steadily refuses preference to himself, or so willingly bestows it on another, as I do; nobody holds so strongly as I do the necessity of ceremony, and the ill effects which follow the breach of it: yet people think me rude; but Barnard did me justice.'"—*Anecdotes.*

genius, if only from the delicate beauty of his compliments. Mrs. Thrale awards the palm of excellence in the same path to Johnson. "Your compliments, Sir, are made seldom, but when they are made, they have an elegance unequalled; but then, when you are angry, who dares make speeches so bitter and so cruel?" "I am sure," she adds, after a semblance of defence on his part, "I have had my share of scolding from you." *Johnson.* "It is true, you have, but you have borne it like an angel, and you have been the better for it." As the discussion proceeds, he accuses her of often provoking him to say severe things by unreasonable commendation; a common mode of acquiring a character for amiability at the expense of one's intimates, who are made to appear uncharitable by being thus constantly placed on the depreciating side.

Some years prior to this period (1778) Mrs. Thrale's mind and character had undergone a succession of the most trying ordeals, and was tempered and improved, without being hardened, by them.

One child after another died at the age when the bereavement is most affecting to a mother. Her husband's health kept her in a constant state of apprehension for his life, and his affairs became embarrassed to the very verge of bankruptcy. So long as they remained prosperous, he insisted on her not meddling with them in any way, and even required her to keep to her drawing-room and leave the conduct of their domestic establishment to the butler and housekeeper. But when (from circumstances detailed in the "Autobiography")

his fortune was seriously endangered, he wisely and gladly availed himself of her prudence and energy, and was saved by so doing. I have now before me a collection of autograph letters from her to Mr. Perkins, then manager and afterwards one of the proprietors of the brewery, from which it appears that she paid the most minute attention to the business, besides undertaking the superintendence of her own hereditary estate in Wales. On September 28, 1773, she writes to Mr. Perkins, who was on a commercial journey:—

"Mr. Thrale is still upon his little tour; I opened a letter from you at the counting-house this morning, and am sorry to find you have so much trouble with Grant and his affairs. How glad I shall be to hear that matter is settled at all to your satisfaction. His letter and remittance came while I was there to-day. . . . . Careless, of the 'Blue Posts,' has turned refractory, and applied to Hoare's people, who have sent him in their beer. I called on him to-day, however, and by dint of an unwearied solicitation, (for I kept him at the coach side a full half-hour) I got his order for six butts more as the final trial."

Examples of fine ladies pressing tradesmen for their votes with compromising importunity are far from rare, but it would be difficult to find a parallel for Johnson's "Hetty" doing duty as a commercial traveller. She was simultaneously obliged to anticipate the electioneering exploits of the Duchess of Devonshire and Mrs. Crewe; and in after life, having occasion to pass through Southwark, she expresses her astonishment

at no longer recognising a place, every hole and corner of which she had three times visited as a canvasser.

After the death of Mr. Thrale, a friend of Mr. H. Thornton canvassed the borough on behalf of that gentleman. He waited on Mrs. Thrale, who promised her support. She concluded her obliging expressions by saying:—"I wish your friend success, and I think he will have it: he may probably come in for two parliaments, but if he tries for a third, were he an angel from heaven, the people of Southwark would cry, 'Not *this* man, but Barabbas.'"*

On one of her canvassing expeditions, Johnson accompanied her, and a rough fellow, a hatter by trade, seeing the moralist's hat in a state of decay, seized it suddenly with one hand, and clapping him on the back with the other, cried out, "Ah, Master Johnson, this is no time to be thinking about hats." "No, no, Sir," replied the Doctor, "hats are of no use now, as you say, except to throw up in the air and huzzah with;" accompanying his words with the true election halloo.

Thrale had serious thoughts of repaying Johnson's electioneering aid in kind, by bringing him into Parliament. Sir John Hawkins says that Thrale had two meetings with the minister (Lord North), who at first seemed inclined to find Johnson a seat, but eventually

* Miss Lætitia Matilda Hawkins vouches for this story.—"Memoir, &c." vol. i. p. 66, note, where she adds:—"I have heard it said, that into whatever company she (Mrs. T.) fell, she could be the most agreeable person in it."

discountenanced the project. Lord Stowell told Mr. Croker that Lord North did not feel quite sure that Johnson's support might not sometimes prove rather an incumbrance than a help. "His lordship perhaps thought, and not unreasonably, that, like the elephant in the battle, he was quite as likely to trample down his friends as his foes." Flood doubted whether Johnson, being long used to sententious brevity and the short flights of conversation, would have succeeded in the expanded kind of argument required in public speaking. Burke's opinion was, that if he had come early into Parliament, he would have been the greatest speaker ever known in it. Upon being told this by Reynolds, he exclaimed, "I should like to try my hand now." On Boswell's adding that he wished he *had*, Mrs. Thrale writes: "Boswell had leisure for curiosity: Ministers had not. Boswell would have been equally amused by his failure as by his success; but to Lord North there would have been no joke at all in the experiment ending untowardly."

He was equally ready with advice and encouragement during the difficulties connected with the brewery. He was not of opinion with Aristotle and Parson Adams, that trade is below a philosopher*; and he eagerly busied himself in computing the cost of the malt and the possible profits on the ale. In October 1772, he writes from Lichfield:—

* "Trade, answered Adams, is below a philosopher, as Aristotle proves in his first chapter of 'Politics,' and unnatural, as it is managed now."—*Joseph Andrews.*

"Do not suffer little things to disturb you. The brew-house must be the scene of action, and the subject of speculation. The first consequence of our late trouble ought to be, an endeavour to brew at a cheaper rate; an endeavour not violent and transient, but steady and continual, prosecuted with total contempt of censure or wonder, and animated by resolution not to stop while more can be done. Unless this can be done, nothing can help us; and if this be done, we shall not want help.

"Surely there is something to be saved; there is to be saved whatever is the difference between vigilance and neglect, between parsimony and profusion.

"The price of malt has risen again. It is now two pounds eight shillings the quarter. Ale is sold in the public-houses at sixpence a quart, a price which I never heard of before.

"I am, &c."

In November of the same year, from Ashbourne:—

"Dear Madam, So many days and never a letter! — *Fugere fides, pietasque pudorque.* This is Turkish usage. And I have been hoping and hoping. But you are so glad to have me out of your mind.

"I think you were quite right in your advice about the thousand pounds, for the payment could not have been delayed long; and a short delay would have lessened credit, without advancing interest. But in great matters you are hardly ever mistaken."

In May 17, 1773:—

"Why should Mr. T—— suppose, that what I took the liberty of suggesting was concerted with you? He does not know how much I revolve his affairs, and how honestly I desire his prosperity. I hope he has let the hint take some hold of his mind."

In the copy of the printed letters presented by Mrs. Thrale to Sir James Fellowes, the blank is filled up with the name of Thrale, and the passage is thus annotated in her handwriting:

"Concerning his (Thrale's) connection with quack chemists, quacks of all sorts; jumping up in the night to go to Marlbro' Street from Southwark, after some advertising mountebank, at hazard of his life."

That Johnson's advice was neither thrown away nor undervalued, may be inferred from an incident related by Boswell. Mr. Perkins had hung up in the counting-house a fine proof of the mezzotinto of Dr. Johnson by Doughty; and when Mrs. Thrale asked him, somewhat flippantly, "Why do you put him up in the counting-house?" Mr. Perkins answered, "Because, Madam, I wish to have one wise man there." "Sir," said Johnson, "I thank you. It is a very handsome compliment, and I believe you speak sincerely."

He was in the habit of paying the most minute attention to every branch of domestic economy, and his suggestions are invariably marked by shrewdness and good sense. Thus when Mrs. Thrale was giving evening parties, he told her that though few people might be hungry after a late dinner, she should always have a

good supply of cakes and sweetmeats on a side table, and that some cold meat and a bottle of wine would often be found acceptable. Notwithstanding the imperfection of his eyesight, and his own slovenliness, he was a critical observer of female dress and demeanour, and found fault without ceremony or compunction when any of his canons of taste or propriety were infringed. Several amusing examples are enumerated by Mrs. Thrale:

"I commended a young lady for her beauty and pretty behaviour one day; however, to whom I thought no objections could have been made. 'I saw her,' said Dr. Johnson, 'take a pair of scissors in her left hand though; and for all her father is now become a nobleman, and as you say excessively rich, I should, were I a youth of quality ten years hence, hesitate between a girl so neglected, and a *negro*.'

"It was indeed astonishing how he *could* remark such minuteness with a sight so miserably imperfect; but no accidental position of a riband escaped him, so nice was his observation, and so rigorous his demands of propriety. When I went with him to Litchfield, and came downstairs to breakfast at the inn, my dress did not please him, and he made me alter it entirely before he would stir a step with us about the town, saying most satirical things concerning the appearance I made in a riding-habit; and adding, 'Tis very strange that such eyes as yours cannot discern propriety of dress: if I had a sight only half as good, I think I should see to the centre.'

"Another lady, whose accomplishments he never denied, came to our house one day covered with diamonds, feathers, &c., and he did not seem inclined to chat with her as usual. I asked him why? when the company was gone. 'Why, her head looked so like that of a woman who shows puppets,' said he, 'and her voice so confirmed the fancy, that I could not bear her to-day; when she wears a large cap, I can talk to her.'

"When the ladies wore lace trimmings to their clothes, he expressed his contempt of the reigning fashion in these terms: 'A Brussels trimming is like bread-sauce,' said he, 'it takes away the glow of colour from the gown, and gives you nothing instead of it; but sauce was invented to heighten the flavour of our food, and trimming is an ornament to the manteau, or it is nothing. Learn,' said he, 'that there is propriety or impropriety in every thing how slight soever, and get at the general principles of dress and of behaviour; if you then transgress them, you will at least know that they are not observed.'"

Madame D'Arblay confirms this account. He had just been finding fault with a bandeau worn by Lady Lade, a very large woman, standing six feet high without her shoes:

"*Dr. J.*—The truth is, women, take them in general, have no idea of grace. Fashion is all they think of. I don't mean Mrs. Thrale and Miss Burney, when I talk of women!—they are goddesses!—and therefore I except them.

"*Mrs. Thrale.* — Lady Lade never wore the bandeau, and said she never would, because it is unbecoming.

"*Dr. J.* (*laughing.*) — Did not she? then is Lady Lade a charming woman, and I have yet hopes of entering into engagements with her!

"*Mrs. T.* — Well, as to that I can't say; but to be sure, the only similitude I have yet discovered in you, is in size: there you agree mighty well.

"*Dr. J.* — Why, if anybody could have worn the bandeau, it must have been Lady Lade; for there is enough of her to carry it off; but you are too little for anything ridiculous; that which seems nothing upon a Patagonian, will become very conspicuous upon a Lilliputian, and of you there is so little in all, that one single absurdity would swallow up half of you."

Matrimony was one of his favourite subjects, and he was fond of laying down and refining on the duties of the married state, and the amount of happiness and comfort to be found in it. But once when he was musing over the fire in the drawing-room at Streatham, a young gentleman called to him suddenly, "Mr. Johnson, would you advise me to marry?" "I would advise no man to marry, Sir," replied the Doctor in a very angry tone, "who is not likely to propagate understanding;" and so left the room. "Our companion," adds Mrs. Thrale, in the "Anecdotes," "looked confounded, and I believe had scarce recovered the consciousness of his own existence, when Johnson came back, and, drawing his chair among us, with altered looks and a softened voice, joined in the general chat, insensibly led

the conversation to the subject of marriage, where he laid himself out in a dissertation so useful, so elegant, so founded on the true knowledge of human life, and so adorned with beauty of sentiment, that no one ever recollected the offence, except to rejoice in its consequences."

The young gentleman was Mr. Thrale's nephew, Sir John Lade; who was proposed, half in earnest, whilst still a minor, by the Doctor as a fitting mate for the author of "Evelina." He married a woman of the town, became a celebrated member of the Four-in-Hand Club, and contrived to waste the whole of a fine fortune before he died.

In "Thraliana" she says: "Lady Lade consulted him about her son, Sir John. 'Endeavour, Madam,' said he (Johnson) 'to procure him knowledge; for really ignorance to a rich man is like fat to a sick sheep, it only serves to call the rooks about him.' On the same occasion it was that he observed how a mind unfurnished with subjects and materials for thinking can keep up no dignity at all in solitude. 'It is,' says he, 'in the state of a mill without grist.'"

The attractions of Streatham must have been very strong, to induce Johnson to pass so much of his time away from "the busy hum of men" in Fleet Street, and "the full tide of human existence" at Charing Cross. He often found fault with Mrs. Thrale for living so much in the country, "feeding the chickens till she starved her understanding." Walking in a wood when it rained, she tells us, "was the only rural image

he pleased his fancy with; for he would say, after one has gathered the apples in an orchard, one wishes them well baked, and removed to a London eating-house for enjoyment." This is almost as bad as the foreigner, who complained that there was no ripe fruit in England but the roasted apples. Amongst other modes of passing time in the country, Johnson once or twice tried hunting and, mounted on an old horse of Mr. Thrale's, acquitted himself to the surprise of the "field," one of whom delighted him by exclaiming, "Why Johnson rides as well, for ought I see, as the most illiterate fellow in England." But a trial or two satisfied him.

> "He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
> Who after a long chase o'er hills, dales, fields,
> And what not, though he rode beyond all price,
> Ask'd next day, 'If men ever hunted twice?'"

It is very strange, and very melancholy, was his reflection, that the paucity of human pleasures should persuade us ever to call hunting one of them. The mode of locomotion in which he delighted was the vehicular. As he was driving rapidly in a postchaise with Boswell, he exclaimed, "Life has not many things better than this." On their way from Dr. Taylor's to Derby in 1777, he said, "If I had no duties, and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a postchaise with a pretty woman, but she should be one who could understand me, and would add something to the conversation."

Mr. Croker attributes his enjoyment to the novelty of the pleasure; his poverty having in early life pre-

vented him from travelling post. But a better reason is given by Mrs. Thrale:

"I asked him why he doated on a coach so? and received for answer, that in the first place, the company were shut in with him *there;* and could not escape, as out of a room; in the next place, he heard all that was said in a carriage, where it was my turn to be deaf: and very impatient was he at my occasional difficulty of hearing. On this account he wished to travel all over the world; for the very act of going forward was delightful to him, and he gave himself no concern about accidents, which he said never happened; nor did the running-away of the horses on the edge of a precipice between Vernon and St. Denys in France convince him to the contrary: 'for nothing came of it,' he said, 'except that Mr. Thrale leaped out of the carriage into a chalk-pit, and then came up again, looking *as white!*' When the truth was, all their lives were saved by the greatest providence ever exerted in favour of three human creatures; and the part Mr. Thrale took from desperation was the likeliest thing in the world to produce broken limbs and death."

The drawbacks on his gratification and on that of his fellow travellers were his physical defects, and his utter insensibility to the beauty of nature, as well as to the fine arts, in so far as they were addressed to the senses of sight and hearing. "He delighted," says Mrs. Thrale, "no more in music than painting; he was almost as deaf as he was blind; travelling with Dr. Johnson was, for these reasons, tiresome enough. Mr. Thrale loved

prospects, and was mortified that his friend could not enjoy the sight of those different dispositions of wood and water, hill and valley, that travelling through England and France affords a man. But when he wished to point them out to his companion: 'Never heed such nonsense,' would be the reply: 'a blade of grass is always a blade of grass, whether in one country or another: let us, if we *do* talk, talk about something; men and women are my subjects of inquiry; let us see how these differ from those we have left behind."

It is no small deduction from our admiration of Johnson, and no trifling enhancement of his friends' kindness in tolerating his eccentricities, that he seldom made allowance for his own palpable and undeniable deficiencies. As well might a blind man deny the existence of colours, as a purblind man assert that there was no charm in a prospect or in a Claude or Titian, because he could see none. Once, by way of pleasing Reynolds, he pretended to lament that the great painter's genius was not exerted on stuff more durable than canvas, and suggested copper. Sir Joshua urged the difficulty of procuring plates large enough for historical subjects. "What foppish obstacles are these!" exclaimed Johnson. "Here is Thrale has a thousand ton of copper: you may paint it all round if you will, I suppose; it will serve him to brew in afterwards. Will it not, Sir?" (to Thrale who sate by.)

He always "civilised" to Dr. Burney, who has supplied the following anecdote:

"After having talked slightingly of music, he was

observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord; and with eagerness he called to her, 'Why don't you dash away like Burney?' Dr. Burney upon this said to him, 'I believe, Sir, we shall make a musician of you at last.' Johnson with candid complacency replied, 'Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.'"

In 1774, the Thrales made a tour in Wales, mainly for the purpose of revisiting her birthplace and estates. They were accompanied by Johnson, who kept a diary of the expedition, beginning July 5th and ending September 24th. It was preserved by his negro servant, and Boswell had no suspicion of its existence, for he says, "I do not find that he kept any journal or notes of what he saw there." The diary was first published by Mr. Duppa in 1816; and some manuscript notes by Mrs. Thrale which reached that gentleman too late for insertion, have been added in Mr. Murray's recent edition of the Life. The first entry is:

"*Tuesday, July* 5. — We left Streatham 11 A.M. Price of four horses two shillings a mile. Barnet 1.40 P.M. On the road I read 'Tully's Epistles.' At night at Dunstable." At Chester, he records: —'We walked round the walls, which are complete, and contain one mile, three quarters, and one hundred and one yards.'" Mrs. Thrale's comment is, "Of those *ill-fated* walls Dr. Johnson might have learned the extent from any one. He has since put me fairly out of countenance by saying, 'I have known *my mistress* fifteen years, and never saw her fairly out of humour but on

Chester wall;' it was because he would keep Miss Thrale beyond her hour of going to bed to walk on the wall, where, from the want of light, I apprehended some accident to her — perhaps to him."

He thus describes Mrs. Thrale's family mansion: — "*Saturday, July* 30.—We went to Bâch y Graig, where we found an old house, built 1567, in an uncommon and incommodious form — My mistress chatted about tiring, but I prevailed on her to go to the top — The floors have been stolen: the windows are stopped — The house was less than I seemed to expect — The River Clwyd is a brook with a bridge of one arch, about one third of a mile — The woods have many trees, generally young; but some which seem to decay — They have been lopped — The house never had a garden — The addition of another story would make an useful house, but it cannot be great."

On the 4th August, they visited Rhuddlan Castle and Bodryddan *, of which he says: —

"Stapylton's house is pretty: there are pleasing shades about it, with a constant spring that supplies a cold bath. We then went out to see a cascade. I trudged unwillingly, and was not sorry to find it dry. The water was, however, turned on, and produced a very striking cataract."

* Now the property of Mr. Shipley Conway, the great-grandson of Johnson's acquaintance, the Bishop of St. Asaph, and representative, through females, of Sir John Conway or Conwy, to whom Rhuddlan Castle, with its domain, was granted by Edward the First.

Mrs. Piozzi remarks on this passage: "He teased Mrs. Cotton about her dry cascade till she was ready to cry." *

On two occasions, Johnson incidentally imputes a want of liberality to Mrs. Thrale, which the general tenor of her conduct belies:

"*August* 2.—We went to Dymerchion Church, where the old clerk acknowledged his mistress. It is the parish church of Bâch y Graig; a mean fabric; Mr. Salusbury (Mrs. Thrale's father) was buried in it. . . The old clerk had great appearance of joy, and foolishly said that he was now willing to die. He had only a crown given him by my mistress."

"*August* 4.—Mrs. Thrale lost her purse. She expressed so much uneasiness that I concluded the sum to be very great; but when I heard of only seven guineas, I was glad to find she had so much sensibility of money."

Johnson might have remarked, that the annoyance we experience from a loss is seldom entirely regulated by the pecuniary value of the thing lost.

On the way to Holywell he sets down: "Talk with mistress about flattery;" on which she notes: "He said I flattered the people to whose houses we went: I was saucy and said I was obliged to be civil for two, meaning himself and me.† He replied nobody would thank

* Bowles, the poet, on the unexpected arrival of a party to see his grounds, was overheard giving a hurried order to set the fountain playing, and carry the hermit his beard.

† Madame D'Arblay reports Mrs. Thrale saying at Streatham in September, 1778:—

"I remember, Sir, when we were travelling in Wales, how you

me for compliments they did not understand. At Gwaynynog (Mr. Middleton's) however, *he* was flattered, and was happy of course."

The other entries referring to the Thrales are: —

"*August* 22.—We went to visit Bodville, the place where Mrs. Thrale was born, and the churches called Tydweilliog and Llangwinodyl, which she holds by impropriation."

"*August* 24.—We went to see Bodville. Mrs. Thrale remembered the rooms, and wandered over them, with recollections of her childhood. This species of pleasure is always melancholy. . . . Mr. Thrale purposes to beautify the churches, and, if he prospers, will probably restore the tithes. Mrs. Thrale visited a house where she had been used to drink milk, which was left, with an estate of 200*l.* a year, by one Lloyd, to a married woman who lived with him."

"*August* 26.—*Note.* Queeny's goats, 149, I think."

Without Mr. Duppa's aid this last entry would be a puzzle for commentators. His note is:

"Mr. Thrale was near-sighted, and could not see the goats browsing on Snowdon, and he promised his daughter, who was a child of ten years old, a penny for every goat she would show him, and Dr. Johnson

called me to account for my civility to the people; 'Madam,' you said, 'let me have no more of this idle commendation of nothing. Why is it, that whatever you see, and whoever you see, you are to be so indiscriminately lavish of praise?' 'Why I'll tell you, Sir,' said I, 'when I am with you, and Mr. Thrale, and Queeny, I am obliged to be civil for four!'"

kept the account; so that it appears her father was in debt to her one hundred and forty-nine pence. *Queeny* was an epithet, which had its origin in the nursery, by which (in allusion to *Queen* Esther) Miss Thrale (whose name was Esther) was always distinguished by Johnson."

She was named after her mother, Hester, not Esther.

On September 13, Johnson sets down: — "We came to Lord Sandys', at Ombersley, where we were treated with great civility." It was here, as he told Mrs. Thrale, that for the only time in his life he had as much wall fruit as he liked; yet she says that he was in the habit of eating six or seven peaches before breakfast during the fruit season at Streatham. Swift was also fond of fruit: "observing (says Scott) that a gentleman in whose garden he walked with some friends, seemed to have no intention to request them to eat any, the Dean remarked that it was a saying of his dear grandmother: —

> "'Always pull a peach
> When it is within your reach;'

and helping himself accordingly, his example was followed by the whole company."

Thomson, the author of the "Castle of Indolence," was once seen lounging round Lord Burlington's garden, with his hands in his waistcoat pockets, biting off the sunny sides of the peaches.

Johnson's dislike to the Lytteltons was not abated by his visit to Hagley, of which he says, "We made haste

away from a place where all were offended." Mrs. Thrale's explanation is: "Mrs. Lyttelton, *ci-devant* Caroline Bristow, forced me to play at whist against my liking, and her husband took away Johnson's candle that he wanted to read by at the other end of the room. Those, I trust, were the offences."

He was not in much better humour at Combermere Abbey, the seat of her relation, Sir Lynch Cotton (grandfather of Lord Combermere), which is beautifully situated on one of the finest lakes in England. He commends the place grudgingly, passes a harsh judgment on Lady Cotton, and is traditionally recorded to have made answer to the baronet who inquired what he thought of a neighbouring peer (Lord Kilmorey): "A dull, commonplace sort of man, just like you and your brother." By way of compensation he has devoted two or three pages of his diary to a bombastic description of his lordship's grounds, which contrasts strangely with the meagre notes of which the rest of it is composed.

In a letter to Levet, dated Lleweny, in Denbighshire, August 16, 1774, printed by Boswell, is this sentence: "Wales, so far as I have yet seen of it, is a very beautiful and rich country, all enclosed and planted." Her marginal note is: "Yet to please Mr. Thrale, he feigned abhorrence of it."

Their impressions of one another as travelling companions were sufficiently favourable to induce the party (with the addition of Baretti) to make a short tour in France in the autumn of the year following, 1775, during part of which Johnson kept a diary in the same

laconic and elliptical style. The only allusion to either of his friends is:

"We went to Sansterre, a brewer. He brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt, and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at sixpence a bottle."

In a letter to Levet, dated Paris, Oct. 22, 1775, he says: —

"We went to see the king and queen at dinner, and the queen was so impressed by Miss, that she sent one of the gentlemen to inquire who she was. I find all true that you have ever told me at Paris. Mr. Thrale is very liberal, and keeps us two coaches, and a very fine table; but I think our cookery very bad. Mrs. Thrale got into a convent of English nuns, and I talked with her through the grate, and I am very kindly used by the English Benedictine friars."

A striking instance of Johnson's occasional impracticability occurred during this journey.

"When we were at Rouen together," says Mrs. Thrale, "he took a great fancy to the Abbé Roffette, with whom he conversed about the destruction of the order of Jesuits, and condemned it loudly, as a blow to the general power of the church, and likely to be followed with many and dangerous innovations, which might at length become fatal to religion itself, and shake even the foundation of Christianity. The gentleman seemed to wonder and delight in his conversation: the talk was all in Latin, which both spoke fluently, and Mr. Johnson

pronounced a long eulogium upon Milton with so much ardour, eloquence, and ingenuity, that the abbé rose from his seat and embraced him. My husband seeing them apparently so charmed with the company of each other, politely invited the abbé to England, intending to oblige his friend; who, instead of thanking, reprimanded him severely before the man, for such a sudden burst of tenderness towards a person he could know nothing at all of; and thus put a sudden finish to all his own and Mr. Thrale's entertainment, from the company of the Abbé Roffette."

In a letter dated May 9, 1780, also, Mrs. Thrale alludes to more than one disagreement in France: —

"When did I ever plague you about contour, and grace, and expression? I have dreaded them all three since that hapless day at Compiegne, when you teased me so, and Mr. Thrale made what I hoped would have proved a lasting peace; but French ground is unfavourable to fidelity perhaps, and so now you begin again: after having taken five years' breath, you might have done more than this. Say another word, and I will bring up afresh the history of your exploits at St. Denys and how cross you were for nothing — but some how or other, our travels never make any part either of our conversation or correspondence."

Joseph Baretti, who now formed one of the family, is so mixed up with their history that a brief account of him becomes indispensable. He was a Piedmontese, whose position in his native country was not of a kind to tempt him to remain in it, when Lord

Charlemont, to whom he had been useful in Italy, proposed his coming to England. His own story was that he had lost at play the little property he had inherited from his father, an architect at Pharo. The education given him by his parents was limited to Latin; he taught himself English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. His talents, acquirements, and strength of mind must have been considerable, for they soon earned him the esteem and friendship of the most eminent members of the Johnsonian circle, in despite of his arrogance. He came to England in 1753; is kindly mentioned in one of Johnson's letters in 1754; and when he was in Italy in 1761, his illustrious friend's letters to him are marked by a tone of affectionate interest. Ceremony and tenderness are oddly blended in the conclusion of one of them:

"May you, my Baretti, be very happy at Milan, or some other place nearer to, Sir, your most affectionate humble servant, SAMUEL JOHNSON."

Johnson remarked of Baretti in 1768: "I know no man who carries his head higher in conversation than Baretti. There are strong powers in his mind. He has not indeed many hooks, but with what hooks he has, he grapples very forcibly." Madame D'Arblay was more struck by his rudeness and violence than by his intellectual vigour.*

On Oct. 20, 1769, Baretti was tried at the Old Bailey on a charge of murder, for killing with a pocket knife

* See "The Diary," vol. i. p. 421.

one of three men who, with a woman of the town, hustled him in the Haymarket.* He was acquitted, and the event is principally memorable for the appearance of Johnson, Burke, Garrick, and Beauclerc as witnesses to character. The substance of Johnson's evidence is thus given in the "Gentleman's Magazine":

"*Dr. J.*—I believe I began to be acquainted with Mr. Baretti about the year 1753 or 1754. I have been intimate with him. He is a man of literature, a very studious man, a man of great diligence. He gets his living by study. I have no reason to think he was ever disordered with liquor in his life. A man that I never knew to be otherwise than peaceable, and a man that I take to be rather timorous.—*Q.* Was he addicted to pick up women in the streets?—*Dr. J.* I never knew that he was.—*Q.* How is he as to eyesight?—*Dr. J.* He does not see me now, nor do I see him. I do not believe he could be capable of assaulting any body in the street, without great provocation."

The year after his acquittal Baretti published "Travels through Spain, Portugal, and France;" thus mentioned by Johnson in a letter to Mrs. Thrale, dated Lichfield, July 20, 1770:

"That Baretti's book would please you all, I made no doubt. I know not whether the world has ever

* In his defence, he said:—"I hope it will be seen that my knife was neither a weapon of offence or defence. I wear it to carve fruit and sweetmeats, and not to kill my fellow creatures. It is a general custom in France not to put knives on the table, so that even ladies wear them in their pockets for general use."

seen such travels before. Those whose lot it is to ramble can seldom write, and those who know how to write can seldom ramble."

The rate of remuneration showed that the world was aware of the value of the acquisition. He gained 500*l.* by this book. His "Frustra Literaria," published some time before in Italy, had also attracted much attention, and, according to Johnson, he was the first who ever received money for copyright in Italy. In a biographical notice of Baretti which appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for May, 1789, written by Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster, it is stated that it was not distress which compelled him to accept Mr. Thrale's hospitality, but that he was over-persuaded by Johnson, contrary to his own inclination, to undertake the instruction of the Misses Thrale in Italian. "He was either nine or eleven years almost entirely in that family," says the Dean, "though he still rented a lodging in town, during which period he expended his own 500*l.*, and received nothing in return for his instruction, but the participation of a good table, and 150*l.* by way of presents. Instead of his letters to Mrs. Piozzi in the 'European Magazine,' had he told this plain unvarnished tale, he would have convicted that lady of avarice and ingratitude, without incurring the danger of a reply, or exposing his memory to be insulted by her advocates."

As he had a pension of 80*l.* a year, besides the interest of his 500*l.*, he did not want money. If he had been allowed to want it, the charge of avarice would lie

at Mr., not Mrs., Thrale's door; and his memory was exposed to no insult beyond the stigma which (as we shall presently see) his conduct and language necessarily fixed upon it. All his literary friends did not entertain the same high opinion of him. An unpublished letter from Dr. Warton to his brother contains the following passage:

"He (Huggins, the translator of Ariosto) abuses Baretti infernally, and says that he one day lent Baretti a gold watch, and could never get it afterwards; that after many excuses Baretti skulked, and then got Johnson to write to Mr. Huggins a suppliant letter; that this letter stopped Huggins awhile, while Baretti got a protection from the Sardinian ambassador; and that, at last, with great difficulty, the watch was got from a pawnbroker to whom Baretti had sold it."

This extract is copied from a valuable contribution to the literary annals of the eighteenth century, for which we are indebted to the colonial press.* It is the diary of an Irish clergyman, containing strong internal evidence of authenticity, although nothing more is known of it than that the manuscript was discovered behind an old press in one of the offices of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. That such a person saw a good deal of Johnson in 1775, is proved by Boswell, whose

* Diary of a Visit to England in 1775. By an Irishman (the Rev. Doctor Thomas Campbell, author of "A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland.") And other Papers by the same hand. With Notes by Samuel Raymond, M.A., Prothonotary of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Sydney. Waugh and Cox. 1854.

accuracy is frequently confirmed in return. In one marginal note Mrs. Thrale says: "He was a fine showy talking man. Johnson liked him of all things in a year or two." In another: "Dr. Campbell was a very tall handsome man, and, speaking of some other *High*-bernian, used this expression: 'Indeed now, and upon my honour, Sir, I am but a Twitter to him.'" *

Several of his entries throw light on the Thrale establishment:

"14*th.* — This day I called at Mr. Thrale's, where I was received with all respect by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. She is a very learned lady, and joins to the charms of her own sex, the manly understanding of ours. The immensity of the brewery astonished me."

"16*th.*—Dined with Mr. Thrale along with Dr. Johnson, and Baretti. Baretti is a plain sensible man, who seems to know the world well. He talked to me of the invitation given him by the College of Dublin, but said it (100*l.* a year and rooms) was not worth his acceptance; and if it had been, he said, in point of profit, still he would not have accepted it, for that now he could not live out of London. He had returned a few years ago to his own country, but he could not enjoy it; and he was obliged to return to London, to those connexions he had been making for near thirty years past. He told me he had several families with whom, both in town and country, he could go at any time and spend a month: he is at this

* He is similarly described in the "Letters," vol. i. p. 329.

time on these terms at Mr. Thrale's; and he knows how to keep his ground. Talking as we were at tea of the magnitude of the beer vessels, he said there was one thing in Mr. Thrale's house still more extraordinary;—meaning his wife. She gulped the pill very prettily,—so much for Baretti! Johnson, you are the very man Lord Chesterfield describes: a Hottentot indeed, and though your abilities are respectable, you never can be respected yourself. He has the aspect of an idiot, without the faintest ray of sense gleaming from any one feature — with the most awkward garb, and unpowdered grey wig, on one side only of his head — he is for ever dancing the devil's jig, and sometimes he makes the most driveling effort to whistle some thought in his absent paroxysms."

"*25th.* — Dined at Mr. Thrale's, where there were ten or more gentlemen, and but one lady besides Mrs. Thrale. The dinner was excellent: first course, soups at head and foot, removed by fish and a saddle of mutton; second course, a fowl they call galena at head, and a capon larger than some of our Irish turkeys, at foot; third course, four different sorts of ices, pine-apple, grape, raspberry, and a fourth; in each remove there were I think fourteen dishes. The two first courses were served in massy plate. I sat beside Baretti, which was to me the richest part of the entertainment. He and Mr. and Mrs. Thrale joined in expressing to me Dr. Johnson's concern that he could not give me the meeting that day, but desired that I should go and see him."

"*April* 1*st.* — Dined at Mr. Thrale's, whom in

proof of the magnitude of London, I cannot help remarking, no coachman, and this is the third I have called, could find without inquiry. But of this by the way. There was Murphy, Boswell, and Baretti: the two last, as I learned just before I entered, are mortal foes, so much so that Murphy and Mrs. Thrale agreed that Boswell expressed a desire that Baretti should be hanged upon that unfortunate affair of his killing, &c. Upon this hint, I went, and without any sagacity, it was easily discernible, for upon Baretti's entering Boswell did not rise, and upon Baretti's descry of Boswell he grinned a perturbed glance. Politeness however smooths the most hostile brows, and theirs were smoothed. Johnson was the subject, both before and after dinner, for it was the boast of all but myself, that under that roof were the Doctor's fast friends. His *bon-mots* were retailed in such plenty, that they, like a surfeit, could not lie upon my memory."

"N.B. The 'Tour to the Western Isles' was written in twenty days, and the 'Patriot' in three; 'Taxation no Tyranny,' within a week: and not one of them would have yet seen the light, had it not been for Mrs. Thrale and Baretti, who stirred him up by laying wagers."

"*April 8th.* — Dined with Thrale, where Dr. Johnson was, and Boswell (and Baretti as usual). The Doctor was not in as good spirits as he was at Dilly's. He had supped the night before with Lady ——, Miss Jeffries, one of the maids of honour, Sir Joshua Reynolds, &c., at Mrs. Abington's. He said Sir C. Thompson, and some others who were there, spoke like people

who had seen good company, and so did Mrs. Abington herself, who could not have seen good company."

Boswell's note, alluding to the same topic, is —

"On Saturday, April 8, I dined with him at Mr. Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr. Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs. Abington's with some fashionable people whom he named; and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle. Nor did he omit to pique his *mistress* a little with jealousy of her housewifery; for he said, with a smile, 'Mrs. Abington's jelly, my dear lady, was better than yours.'"

The monotony of a constant residence at Streatham was varied by trips to Bath or Brighton; and it was so much a matter of course for Johnson to make one of the party, that when, not expecting him so soon back from a journey with Boswell, the Thrale family and Baretti started for Bath without him, Boswell is disposed to treat their departure without the lexicographer as a slight to him.

In his first letter of condolence on Mr. Thrale's death, Johnson speaks of her having enjoyed happiness in marriage, "to a degree of which, without personal knowledge, I should have thought the description fabulous." The "Autobiography" tells a widely different tale. The mortification of not finding herself appreciated by her husband was poignantly increased, during the last years of his life, by finding another offensively preferred to her. He was so fascinated by one of her fair friends, as to lose sight altogether of what

was due to appearances or to the feelings of his wife. The story she told the author of "Piozziana," in proof of Johnson's want of firmness, clearly refers to this lady:

"I had remarked to her that Johnson's readiness to condemn any moral deviation in others was, in a man so entirely before the public as he was, nearly a proof of his own spotless purity of conduct. She said, 'Yes, Johnson was, on the whole, a rigid moralist; but he could be ductile, I may say, servile; and I will give you an instance. We had a large dinner-party at our house; Johnson sat on one side of me, and Burke on the other; and in the company there was a young female (Mrs. Piozzi named her)*, to whom I, in my peevishness, thought Mr. Thrale superfluously attentive, to the neglect of me and others; especially of myself, then near my confinement, and dismally low-spirited; notwithstanding which, Mr. T. very unceremoniously begged of me to change place with Sophy ——, who was threatened with a sore throat, and might be injured by sitting near the door. I had scarcely swallowed a spoonful of soup when this occurred, and was so overset by the coarseness of the proposal, that I burst into tears, said something petulant — that perhaps ere long, the lady might be at the head of Mr. T.'s table, without displacing the mistress of the house, &c., and so left the apartment. I retired to the drawing-room, and for

* Sophia Streatfield, the charming S.S., as Thrale and Johnson called her, and the lady of the ivory neck &c. (*antè*, p. 50). There is a good deal about her in the "Autobiography."

an hour or two contended with my vexation, as I best could, when Johnson and Burke came up. On seeing them, I resolved to give a *jobation* to both, but fixed on Johnson for my charge, and asked him if he had noticed what passed, what I had suffered, and whether, allowing for the state of my nerves, I was much to blame?' He answered, 'Why, possibly not; your feelings were outraged.' I said, 'Yes, greatly so; and I cannot help remarking with what blandness and composure you *witnessed* the outrage. Had this transaction been told of others, your anger would have known no bounds; but, towards a man who gives good dinners, &c., you were meekness itself!' Johnson coloured, and Burke, I thought, looked foolish; but I had not a word of answer from either."

The only excuse for Mr. Thrale is to be found in his mental and bodily condition at the time. This made it impossible for Johnson or Burke to interfere without a downright quarrel with him, nor without making matters worse. Highly to her credit, she did not omit any part of her own duties because he forgot his. In March, 1781, a few weeks before his death, she writes to Johnson:

"I am willing to show myself in Southwark, or in any place, for my master's pleasure or advantage; but have no present conviction that to be re-elected would be advantageous, so shattered a state as his nerves are in just now — Do not you, however, fancy for a moment, that I shrink from fatigue — or desire to escape from doing my duty; — spiting one's antagonist is a

reason that never ought to operate, and never does operate with me: I care nothing about a rival candidate's innuendos, I care only about my husband's health and fame; and if we find that he earnestly wishes to be once more member for the Borough—he *shall* be member, if anything done or suffered by me will help make him so."

Referring to the spring of 1781, "I found," says Boswell, "on visiting Mr. Thrale that he was now very ill, and had removed, I suppose by the solicitation of Mrs. Thrale, to a house in Grosvenor Square." She has written opposite: "Spiteful again! He went by direction of his physicians where they could easiest attend to him." On February 7, 1781, she writes to Madame D'Arblay:

"Yesterday I had a conversazione. Mrs. Montagu was brilliant in diamonds, solid in judgment, critical in talk. Sophy smiled, Piozzi sung, Pepys panted with admiration, Johnson was good humoured, Lord John Clinton attentive, Dr. Bowdler lame, and my master not asleep. Mrs. Ord looked elegant, Lady Rothes dainty, Mrs. Davenant dapper, and Sir Philip's curls were all blown about by the wind. Mrs. Byron rejoices that her Admiral and I agree so well; the way to his heart is connoisseurship it seems, and for a background and contorno, who comes up to Mrs. Thrale, you know."

We learn from Madame D'Arblay's Journal, that, towards the end of March, 1781, Mr. Thrale had resolved on going abroad with his wife, and that Johnson

was to accompany them, but a subsequent entry states that the doctors condemned the plan; and "therefore," she adds, "it is settled that a great meeting of his friends is to take place before he actually prepares for the journey, and they are to encircle him in a body, and endeavour, by representations and entreaties, to prevail with him to give it up; and I have little doubt myself but, amongst us, we shall be able to succeed." This is one of the oddest schemes ever projected by a set of eminently learned and accomplished gentlemen and ladies for the benefit of a hypochondriac patient. Its execution was prevented by his death April 4th, 1781. The hurried note from Mrs. Thrale announcing the event, beginning, "Write to me, pray for me," is endorsed by Madame D'Arblay: "Written a few hours after the death of Mr. Thrale, which happened by a sudden stroke of apoplexy, on the morning of a day on which half the fashion of London had been invited to an intended assembly at his house in Grosvenor Square." These invitations had been sent out by his own express desire: so little was he aware of his danger. Letters and messages of condolence poured in from all sides. Johnson says all that can be said in the way of counsel or consolation:

"I do not exhort you to reason yourself into tranquillity. We must first pray, and then labour; first implore the blessing of God, and those means which He puts into our hands. Cultivated ground has few weeds; a mind occupied by lawful business, has little room for useless regret.

"We read the will to-day; but I will not fill my first letter with any other account than that, with all my zeal for your advantage, I am satisfied; and that the other executors, more used to consider property than I, commended it for wisdom and equity. Yet why should I not tell you that you have five hundred pounds for your immediate expenses, and two thousand pounds a-year, with both the houses and all the goods?

"Let us pray for one another, that the time, whether long or short, that shall yet be granted us, may be well spent; and that when this life, which at the longest is very short, shall come to an end, a better may begin which shall never end."

On April 9th he writes:

"DEAREST MADAM,—That you are gradually recovering your tranquillity, is the effect to be humbly expected from trust in God. Do not represent life as darker than it is. Your loss has been very great, but you retain more than almost any other can hope to possess. You are high in the opinion of mankind; you have children from whom much pleasure may be expected; and that you will find many friends, you have no reason to doubt. Of my friendship, be it worth more or less, I hope you think yourself certain, without much art or care. It will not be easy for me to repay the benefits that I have received; but I hope to be always ready at your call. Our sorrow has different effects; you are withdrawn into solitude, and I am driven into company. I am afraid of thinking what I

have lost. I never had such a friend before. Let me have your prayers and those of my dear Queeny.

"The prudence and resolution of your design to return so soon to your business and your duty deserves great praise; I shall communicate it on Wednesday to the other executors. Be pleased to let me know whether you would have me come to Streatham to receive you, or stay here till the next day."

Johnson was one of the executors, and took pride in discharging his share of the trust. Mrs. Thrale's account (in the "Autobiography") of the pleasure he took in signing the cheques, is incidentally confirmed by Boswell:—

"I could not but be somewhat diverted by hearing Johnson talk in a pompous manner of his new office, and particularly of the concerns of the brewery, which it was at last resolved should be sold. Lord Lucan tells a very good story, which, if not precisely exact, is certainly characteristical; that when the sale of Thrale's brewery was going forward, Johnson appeared bustling about, with an ink-horn and pen in his button-hole, like an excise-man; and on being asked what he really considered to be the value of the property which was to be disposed of, answered, 'We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.'"

The executors had legacies of 200*l.* each; Johnson, to the surprise of his friends, being placed on no better footing than the rest. Many and heavy as were the reproaches subsequently heaped upon the widow,

no one accused her of being in any respect wanting in energy, propriety, or self-respect at this period. She took the necessary steps for promoting her own interests and those of her children with prudence and promptitude. Madame D'Arblay, who was carrying on a flirtation with one of the executors (Mr. Crutchley), and had personal motives for watching their proceedings, writes, April 29th :—

"Miss Thrale is steady and constant, and very sincerely grieved for her father.

"The four executors, Mr. Cator, Mr. Crutchley, Mr. Henry Smith, and Dr. Johnson, have all behaved generously and honourably, and seem determined to give Mrs. Thrale all the comfort and assistance in their power. She is to carry on the business jointly with them. Poor soul! it is a dreadful toil and worry to her."

"*Streatham, Thursday.*—This was the great and most important day to all this house, upon which the sale of the brewery was to be decided. Mrs. Thrale went early to town, to meet all the executors, and Mr. Barclay, the Quaker, who was the *bidder*. She was in great agitation of mind, and told me if all went well she would wave a white pocket-handkerchief out of the coach window.

"Four o'clock came and dinner was ready, and no Mrs. Thrale. Five o'clock followed, and no Mrs. Thrale. Queeny and I went out upon the lawn, where we sauntered, in eager expectation, till near six, and then the coach appeared in sight, and a white pocket-

handkerchief was waved from it. I ran to the door of it to meet her, and she jumped out of it, and gave me a thousand embraces while I gave my congratulations. We went instantly to her dressing-room, where she told me, in brief, how the matter had been transacted, and then we went down to dinner. Dr. Johnson and Mr. Crutchley had accompanied her home."

The event is thus announced to Langton by Johnson, in a letter printed by Boswell, dated June 16, 1781: "You will perhaps be glad to hear that Mrs. Thrale is disencumbered of her brewhouse, and that it seemed to the purchaser so far from an evil that he was content to give for it 135,000*l.* Is the nation ruined." *Marginal note:* "I suppose he was neither glad nor sorry."

The brewery was purchased by Messrs. Barclay, Perkins, and Co. The house at Streatham was left to Mrs. Thrale for her life, but in the course of the following year she made up her mind to let it; and there was no foundation for the remark with which Boswell accompanies his account of Johnson's solemn farewell to Streatham:—

"Whether," he says, "her attachment to him was already divided by another object, I am unable to ascertain; but it is plain that Johnson's penetration was alive to her neglect or forced attention; for on the 6th October this year, 1782, we find him making a 'parting use of the library' at Streatham, and pronouncing a prayer which he composed on leaving Mrs. Thrale's *family*."

In one of his memorandum books Johnson wrote:—

"Sunday, went to church at Streatham, *Templo valedixi cum osculo*" (I bade farewell to the temple with a kiss); and in the same book is a Latin entry, particularising his last dinner at Streatham, and ending "*Streathamiam quando revisam?*" (when shall I revisit Streatham?)*

Madame D'Arblay's Diary proves that, far from having left Mrs. Thrale's family, he was living with them at Brighton on the 26th of the same month, having come with them from Streatham, and on October 28th she writes:—

"At dinner, we had Dr. Delap and Mr. Selwyn, who accompanied us in the evening to a ball; as did also Dr. Johnson, to the universal amazement of all who saw him there;—but he said he had found it so dull being quite alone the preceding evening, that he determined upon going with us; 'for,' he said, 'it cannot be worse than being alone.' Strange that he should think so! I am sure I am not of his mind."

On the 29th, she records that Johnson behaved very rudely to Mr. Pepys, and fairly drove him from the

* Mr. Croker terms this entry his farewell to the kitchen. It runs thus:—

"Oct. 6. Die Dominica, 1782.

"Pransus sum Streathamiæ agninum crus coctum cum herbis (spinach) comminutis, farcimen farinaceum cum uvis passis, lumbos bovillos, et pullum gallinæ Turcicæ; et post carnes missas, ficus, uvas, non admodum maturas, ita voluit anni intemperies. cum malis Persicis, iis tamen duris. Non lætus accubui, cibum modicè sumpsi, ne intemperantiâ ad extremum peccaretur. Si recte memini, in mentem venerunt epulæ in exequiis Hadoni celebratæ. Streathamiam quando revisam?"—*Rose MSS.*

house. The entry for November 10th is remarkable:—"We spent this evening at Lady De Ferrars, where Dr. Johnson accompanied us, for the first time he has been invited of our parties since my arrival." On the 20th November, she tells us that Mrs. and the three Miss Thrales and herself got up early to bathe. "We then returned home, and dressed by candle-light, and, as soon as we could get Dr. Johnson ready, we set out upon our journey in a coach and a chaise, and arrived in Argyll Street at dinner time. Mrs. Thrale has there fixed her tent for this short winter, which will end with the beginning of April, when her foreign journey takes place."

On Boswell's arrival in London the year following (March 20, 1783) he found Johnson still domesticated with Mrs. Thrale and her daughters in Argyll Street, and judging from their manner to each other, "imagined all to be as well as formerly." But three months afterwards (June 19th) Johnson writes to her:—

"I am sitting down in no cheerful solitude to write a narrative which would once have affected you with tenderness and sorrow, but which you will perhaps pass over now with the careless glance of frigid indifference. For this diminution of regard, however, I know not whether I ought to blame you, who may have reasons which I cannot know, and I do not blame myself, who have for a great part of human life done you what good I could, and have never done you evil."

Two days before, he had suffered a paralytic stroke, and lost the power of speech for a period. After mi-

nutely detailing his ailments and their treatment by his medical advisers, he proceeds:—

"How this will be received by you I know not. I hope you will sympathise with me; but perhaps

> "My mistress gracious, mild, and good,
> Cries! Is he dumb? 'Tis time he should.

"But can this be possible? I hope it cannot. I hope that what, when I could speak, I spoke of you, and to you, will be in a sober and serious hour remembered by you; and surely it cannot be remembered but with some degree of kindness. I have loved you with virtuous affection; I have honoured you with sincere esteem. Let not all our endearments be forgotten, but let me have in this great distress your pity and your prayers. You see I yet turn to you with my complaints as a settled and unalienable friend; do not, do not drive me from you, for I have not deserved either neglect or hatred."

Mrs. Thrale was at Bath, and did all she could to comfort him. Whilst his illness lasted, he sent her a regular diary, and on June 28th he sets down in it:—"Your letter is just such as I desire, and as from you I hope always to deserve." He was so absorbed with his own sufferings, as to make no allowance for hers. Yet her own health was in a very precarious state, and in the autumn of the same year, his complaints of silence and neglect are suspended by the intelligence that her daughter Sophia was lying at death's door. On March 27, 1784, she writes:—

"You tell one of my daughters that you know not with distinctness the cause of my complaints. I believe she who lives with me knows them no better; one very dreadful one is however removed by dear Sophia's recovery. It is kind in you to quarrel no more about expressions which were not meant to offend; but unjust to suppose, I have not lately thought myself dying. Let us, however, take the Prince of Abyssinia's advice, *and not add to the other evils of life the bitterness of controversy.* If courage is a noble and generous quality, let us exert it *to* the last, and *at* the last: if faith is a Christian virtue, let us willingly receive and accept that support it will most surely bestow — and do permit me to repeat those words with which I know not why you were displeased: *Let us leave behind us the best example that we can.*

"All this is not written by a person in high health and happiness, but by a fellow-sufferer, who has more to endure than she can tell, or you can guess; and now let us talk of the Severn salmons, which will be coming in soon; I shall send you one of the finest, and shall be glad to hear that your appetite is good."

The pleasures of intimacy in friendship depend far more on external circumstances than people of a sentimental turn of mind are willing to concede; and when constant companionship ceases to suit the convenience of both parties, the chances are that it will be dropped on the first favourable opportunity. Admiration, esteem, or affection may continue to be felt for one whom, from altered habits or new ties, we can no

longer receive as an inmate or an established member of the family circle. It is to be regretted, therefore, that Mrs. Thrale should have rested her partial estrangement from Johnson upon grounds which would justify a suspicion that much of the cordiality she had shown him during the palmy days of their friendship had been forced. In her "Anecdotes," after mentioning an instance of his violence, she says:

"Such accidents, however, occurred too often, and I was forced to take advantage of my lost lawsuit, and plead inability of purse to remain longer in London or its vicinage. I had been crossed in my intentions of going abroad, and found it convenient, for every reason of health, peace, and pecuniary circumstances, to retire to Bath, where I knew Mr. Johnson would not follow me and where I could for that reason command some little portion of time for my own use; a thing impossible while I remained at Streatham or at London, as my hours, carriage, and servants, had long been at his command who would not rise in the morning till twelve o'clock perhaps, and oblige me to make breakfast for him till the bell rung for dinner, though much displeased if the toilet was neglected, and though much of the time we passed together was spent in blaming or deriding, very justly, my neglect of economy, and waste of that money which might make many families happy. The original reason of our connexion, his *particularly disordered health and spirits*, had been long at an end, and he had no other ailments than old age and general infirmity, which every professor of medicine was ardently

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zealous and generally attentive to palliate, and to contribute all in their power for the prolongation of a life so valuable. Veneration for his virtue, reverence for his talents, delight in his conversation, and habitual endurance of a yoke my husband first put upon me, and of which he contentedly bore his share for sixteen or seventeen years, made me go on so long with Mr. Johnson; but the perpetual confinement I will own to have been terrifying in the first years of our friendship, and irksome in the last; nor could I pretend to support it without help, when my coadjutor was no more. To the assistance we gave him, the shelter our house afforded to his uneasy fancies, and to the pains we took to soothe or repress them, the world perhaps is indebted for the three political pamphlets, the new edition and correction of his Dictionary, and for the Poets' Lives, which he would scarce have lived, I think, and kept his faculties entire, to have written, had not incessant care been exerted at the time of his first coming to be our constant guest in the country; and several times after that, when he found himself particularly oppressed with diseases incident to the most vivid and fervent imaginations. I shall for ever consider it as the greatest honour which could be conferred on any one, to have been the confidential friend of Dr. Johnson's health, and to have in some measure, with Mr. Thrale's assistance, saved from distress at least, if not from worse, a mind great beyond the comprehension of common mortals and good beyond all hope of imitation from perishable beings."

This, in forensic phrase, is her case.

That the resolution to live more apart from her venerated friend would have been taken independently of Piozzi, is likely enough; but she had little reason to wonder or complain that it was attributed to her growing affection for her future husband. Her account of the commencement of their acquaintance, and the growth of their attachment, forms one of the most striking fragments of her Autobiography. She says that in August, 1780, Madame D'Arblay recommended him by letter as "a man likely to lighten the burden of life to her," and that both she and Mr. Thrale took to him at once. Madame D'Arblay is silent on the subject of the introduction or recommendation. She told the Rev. W. Harness, who told me, that the first time Mrs. Thrale was in a room with Piozzi, she stood behind him when he was singing, and mimicked his gestures. On August 24, 1780, Madame D'Arblay writes:—"I have not seen Piozzi; he left me your letter, which indeed is a charming one, though its contents puzzled me much whether to make me sad or merry." In her Diary, dated Streatham, July 16, 1781, she sets down:

"You will believe I was not a little surprised to see Sacchini. He is going to the Continent with Piozzi, and Mrs. Thrale invited them both to spend the last day at Streatham, and from hence proceed to Margate."

"The first song he sang, beginning 'En quel amabil volto,' you may perhaps know, but I did not; it is a charming mezza bravura. He and Piozzi then sung

together the duet of the 'Amore Soldato;' and nothing could be much more delightful; Piozzi taking pains to sing his very best, and Sacchini, with his soft but delicious whisper, almost thrilling me by his exquisite and pathetic expression. They then went through that opera, great part of 'Creso,' some of 'Erifile,' and much of 'Rinaldo.'"

In February, 1782, Piozzi is thus mentioned in a letter from Mrs. Thrale to Madame D'Arblay:—"This morning I was with him (Johnson) again, and this evening Mrs. Ord's conversation and Piozzi's *cara voce* have kept away care pretty well." It was never asserted or insinuated by her bitterest enemies that her regard for him took too warm a tinge whilst Thrale lived, and it appears to have ripened slowly into love, manifesting no symptoms calculated to excite suspicion till the year before the crisis. Piozzi's attentions to the wealthy widow had attracted Johnson's notice without troubling his peace. On November 24th, 1781, he wrote from Ashbourne:—"Piozzi, I find, is coming in spite of Miss Harriet's prediction, or second sight, and when *he* comes and *I* come, you will have two about you that love you; and I question if either of us heartily care how few more you have. But how many soever they may be, I hope you keep your kindness for me, and I have a great mind to have Queeny's kindness too."

Again, December 3rd, 1781:—"You have got Piozzi again, notwithstanding pretty Harriet's dire denunciations. The Italian translation which he has brought, you will find no great accession to your library, for the

writer seems to understand very little English. When we meet we can compare some passages. Pray contrive a multitude of good things for us to do when we meet. Something that may *hold all together;* though if any thing makes *me* love you more, it is going from you."

Madame D'Arblay, who registers her friend's movements as carefully and minutely as her own, states in August, 1782, that Streatham had been let to Lord Shelburne, and that "My dear Mrs. Thrale, the friend, though not the *most* dear friend, of my heart, is going abroad for three years certain. This scheme has been some time in a sort of distant agitation, but it is now brought to a resolution. Much private business belongs to it relative to her detestable lawsuit; but much private inclination is also joined with it relative to her long wishing to see Italy."

This scheme of visiting Italy was abandoned, and the friends continued living on the usual terms; Mrs. Thrale's time, as we learn from the Diary, being divided between Argyll Street, Brighton, and Bath. In the meantime, Piozzi's suit had been successfully prosecuted, and her growing inclination for him, although she resisted it with might and main, at length got the better of pride and prudence, and in the spring of 1783 she had entered into a formal engagement to become his wife. The repugnance of her daughters to the match was reasonable and intelligible, but to appreciate the tone taken by her friends, we must bear in mind the social position of Italian singers and musical performers at the period.

"Amusing vagabonds" are the epithets by which Lord Byron designates Catalani and Naldi, in 1809*; and such is the light in which they were undoubtedly regarded in 1783. Mario would have been treated with the same indiscriminating illiberality as Piozzi. The newspapers took up the subject, and rang the changes on the amorous disposition of the widow and the adroit cupidity of the fortune-hunter. So pelting and pitiless was the storm of taunts and reproaches, and so urgent were the remonstrances, that a temporary reaction was effected: her promise was withdrawn; her letters were returned; and Piozzi was persuaded to leave the country. But the sustained effort imposed upon her was beyond her strength: her health gave way under the resulting conflict of emotions; and her daughters reluctantly connived at his recall by her physician as a measure

* "Well may the nobles of our present race
Watch each distortion of a Naldi's face;
Well may they smile on Italy's buffoons,
And worship Catalani's pantaloons."

"Naldi and Catalani require little notice; for the visage of the one and the salary of the other will enable us long to recollect these amusing vagabonds."—*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* Artists in general, and men of letters by profession, did not rank much higher in the fine world. (See Miss Berry's "England and France," vol. ii. p. 42.) Iffland, the German dramatist, had a *liaison* with a Prussian woman of rank. On her husband's death he proposed marriage, and was indignantly refused. The lady was conscious of no degradation from being his mistress, but would have forfeited both caste and self-respect by becoming his wife.

on which her life depended. She was married to him on the 25th of July, 1784.

Madame D'Arblay has recorded what took place between Mrs. Piozzi and herself on the occasion:

Miss F. Burney to Mrs. Piozzi.

"Norbury Park, Aug. 10, 1784.

"When my wondering eyes first looked over the letter I received last night, my mind instantly dictated a high-spirited vindication of the consistency, integrity, and faithfulness of the friendship thus abruptly reproached and cast away. But a sleepless night gave me leisure to recollect that you were ever as generous as precipitate, and that your own heart would do justice to mine, in the cooler judgment of future reflection. Committing myself, therefore, to that period, I determined simply to assure you, that if my last letter hurt either you or Mr. Piozzi, I am no less sorry than surprised; and that if it offended you, I sincerely beg your pardon.

"Not to that time, however, can I wait to acknowledge the pain an accusation so unexpected has caused me, nor the heartfelt satisfaction with which I shall receive, when you are able to write it, a softer renewal of regard.

"May Heaven direct and bless you!

"F. B.

"N.B. This is the sketch of the answer which F. B. most painfully wrote to the unmerited reproach of not

sending *cordial congratulations* upon a marriage which she had uniformly, openly, and with deep and avowed affliction, thought wrong.

"*Mrs. Piozzi to Miss Burney.*

"Wellbeck Street, No. 33, Cavendish Square.
"Friday, Aug. 13, 1784.

"Give yourself no serious concern, sweetest Burney. All is well, and I am too happy myself to make a friend otherwise; quiet your kind heart immediately, and love my husband if you love his and your

"H. L. Piozzi.

"N.B. To this kind note, F. B. wrote the warmest and most affectionate and heartfelt reply; but never received another word! And here and thus stopped a correspondence of six years of almost unequalled partiality, and fondness on her side; and affection, gratitude, admiration, and sincerity on that of F. B., who could only conjecture the cessation to be caused by the resentment of Piozzi, when informed of her constant opposition to the union."

Of the six letters which passed between Johnson and Mrs. Piozzi on the same subject, only two (Nos. 1 and 5) have hitherto been made public: and the incompleteness of the correspondence has caused the most embarrassing confusion in the minds of biographers and editors, too prone to act on the maxim, that, wherever female reputation is concerned, we should hope for the

best and believe the worst. Hawkins, apparently ignorant that she had written to Johnson to announce her intention, says, "He was made uneasy by a report" which induced him to write a strong letter of remonstrance, of which what he calls an *adumbration* was published in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for December 1784. Mr. Croker, avoiding a similar error, says:—"In the lady's own (part) publication of the correspondence, this letter (No. 1) is given as from Mrs. Piozzi, and is signed with the initial of her name: Dr. Johnson's answer is also addressed to Mrs. Piozzi, and both the letters allude to the matter as *done;* yet it appears by the periodical publications of the day, that the marriage did not take place until the 25th July. The editor knew not how to account for this but by supposing that Mrs. Piozzi, to avoid Johnson's importunity, had stated that as done which was only *settled to be done.*"

The matter is made plain by the circular (No. 2) which states that "Piozzi is coming back from Italy." He arrived on July 2nd, after a fifteen months' absence, which proved both his loyalty and the sincerity of the struggle in her own heart and mind. There is no signature to her first autograph letter, and both Dr. Johnson's autograph letters are addressed to *Mrs. Thrale.* But she has occasioned the mistake into which so many have fallen, by her mode of heading these when she printed the two-volume edition of "Letters" in 1788. By the kindness of Mr. Salusbury I am now enabled to print the whole correspondence, with the exception of her last letter, which she describes.

No. 1.

"Mrs. Piozzi to Dr. Johnson.

"Bath, June 30.

"My Dear Sir,—The enclosed is a circular letter which I have sent to all the guardians, but our friendship demands somewhat more; it requires that I should beg your pardon for concealing from you a connexion which you must have heard of by many, but I suppose never believed. Indeed, my dear Sir, it was concealed only to save us both needless pain; I could not have borne to reject that counsel it would have killed me to take, and I only tell it you now because all is irrevocably settled and out of your power to prevent. I will say, however, that the dread of your disapprobation has given me some anxious moments, and though perhaps I am become by many privations the most independent woman in the world, I feel as if acting without a parent's consent till you write kindly to

"Your faithful servant."

No. 2. *Circular.*

"Sir,—As one of the executors of Mrs. Thrale's will and guardian to his daughters, I think it my duty to acquaint you that the three eldest left Bath last Friday for their own house at Brighthelmstone in company with an amiable friend, Miss Nicholson, who has sometimes resided with us here, and in whose society they may, I think, find some advantages and certainly no disgrace. I waited on them to Salisbury, Wilton, &c., and offered to attend them to the seaside myself,

but they preferred this lady's company to mine, having heard that Mr. Piozzi is coming back from Italy, and judging perhaps by our past friendship and continued correspondence that his return would be succeeded by our marriage.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant.

"Bath, June 30, 1784."

No. 3.

"MADAM,—If I interpret your letter right, you are ignominiously married: if it is yet undone, let us *once* more *talk** together. If you have abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive your wickedness; if you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do no further mischief. If the last act is yet to do, I who have loved you, esteemed you, reverenced you, and *served you* *, I who long thought you the first of womankind, entreat that, before your fate is irrevocable, I may once more see you. I was, I once was, Madam, most truly yours,

"July 2, 1784. "SAM. JOHNSON.

"I will come down if you permit it."

No. 4.

"July 4, 1784.

"SIR,—I have this morning received from you so rough a letter in reply to one which was both tenderly and

* The four words which I have printed in italics are indistinctly written, and cannot be satisfactorily made out.

respectfully written, that I am forced to desire the conclusion of a correspondence which I can bear to continue no longer. The birth of my second husband is not meaner than that of my first; his sentiments are not meaner; his profession is not meaner, and his superiority in what he professes acknowledged by all mankind. It is want of fortune, then, that is ignominious; the character of the man I have chosen has no other claim to such an epithet. The religion to which he has been always a zealous adherent will, I hope, teach him to forgive insults he has not deserved; mine will, I hope, enable me to bear them at once with dignity and patience. To hear that I have forfeited my fame is indeed the greatest insult I ever yet received. My fame is as unsullied as snow, or I should think it unworthy of him who must henceforth protect it.

"I write by the coach the more speedily and effectually to prevent your coming hither. Perhaps by my fame (and I hope it is so) you mean only that celebrity which is a consideration of a much lower kind. I care for that only as it may give pleasure to my husband and his friends.

"Farewell, dear Sir, and accept my best wishes. You have always commanded my esteem, and long enjoyed the fruits of a friendship never infringed by one harsh expression on my part during twenty years of familiar talk. Never did I oppose your will, or control your wish; nor can your unmerited severity itself lessen my regard; but till you have changed your opinion of Mr. Piozzi, let us converse no more. God bless you."

No. 5.

To Mrs. Piozzi.

"London, July 8, 1784.

"DEAR MADAM,—What you have done, however I may lament it, I have no pretence to resent, as it has not been injurious to me: I therefore breathe out one sigh more of tenderness, perhaps useless, but at least sincere.

"I wish that God may grant you every blessing, that you may be happy in this world for its short continuance, and eternally happy in a better state; and whatever I can contribute to your happiness I am very ready to repay, for that kindness which soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched.

"Do not think slightly of the advice which I now presume to offer. Prevail upon Mr. Piozzi to settle in England: you may live here with more dignity than in Italy, and with more security; your rank will be higher, and your fortune more under your own eye. I desire not to detail all my reasons, but every argument of prudence and interest is for England, and only some phantoms of imagination seduce you to Italy.

"I am afraid, however, that my counsel is vain, yet I have eased my heart by giving it.

"When Queen Mary took the resolution of sheltering herself in England, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, attempting to dissuade her, attended on her journey; and when they came to the irremeable stream * that

* Queen Mary left the Scottish for the English coast, on the

separated the two kingdoms, walked by her side into the water, in the middle of which he seized her bridle, and with earnestness proportioned to her danger and his own affection pressed her to return. The Queen went forward.——If the parallel reaches thus far, may it go no farther.—The tears stand in my eyes.

"I am going into Derbyshire, and hope to be followed by your good wishes, for I am, with great affection,

"Your, &c.

"Any letters that come for me hither will be sent me."

In a memorandum on this letter, she says:—"I wrote him a very kind and affectionate farewell." Miss Hawkins says: "It was I who discovered the letter (No. 4). I carried it to my father: he enclosed it and sent it to her, there never having been any intercourse between them."* Hawkins states that a letter from Johnson to himself contained these words:—

"Poor Thrale! I thought that either her virtue or

Firth of Solway, in a fishing-boat. The incident to which Johnson alludes is introduced in "The Abbot;" where the scene is laid on the sea-shore. The unusual though expressive term "irremeable," is defined in his dictionary, "admitting no return." His authority is Dryden's Virgil:

> "The keeper dream'd, the chief without delay
> Pass'd on, and took th' irremeable way."

The word is a Latin one anglicised:

> "Evaditque celer ripam irremeabilis undæ."

* Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 66, note.

her vice (meaning her love of her children or her pride) would have restrained her from such a marriage. She is now become a subject for her enemies to exult over, and for her friends, if she has any left, to forget or pity."

Harsh language, and exhibiting little of that allowance for human frailty which might have been expected from the author of "Rasselas" and the "Rambler." Did he or the rest of her acquaintance who joined in censuring or repudiating her, ever attempt to enter into her feelings, and weigh her conduct with reference to its tendency to promote her own happiness? Could they have done so, had they tried? Can any one so identify himself or herself with another as to be sure of the soundness of the counsel, or the justice of the reproof? She was neither impoverishing her children (who had all independent fortunes) nor abandoning them. She was setting public opinion at defiance, which is commonly a foolish thing to do; but what is public opinion to a woman whose heart is breaking, and who finds, after a desperate effort, that she is unequal to the sacrifice demanded of her? She accepted Piozzi deliberately, with full knowledge of his character; and she never repented of her choice.

The Lady Cathcart, whose romantic story is mentioned in "Castle Rackrent," was wont to say:—"I have been married three times; the first for money, the second for rank, the third for love; and the third was worst of all." Mrs. Piozzi's experience would have led to an opposite conclusion. Her love match was an

eminently happy one; and the consciousness that she had transgressed conventional observances or prejudices, not moral rules, enabled her to outlive and bear down calumny.*

Madame D'Arblay says that her father was not disinclined to admit Mrs. Piozzi's right to consult her own notions of happiness in the choice of a second husband, had not the paramount duty of watching over her unmarried daughters interfered. On this topic, Mrs. Piozzi says, "that her eldest daughter (then near twenty†) having refused to join the wedding party on their tour, she left a lady whom they appeared to like exceedingly, with them." This lady disappointed expectation, and left them, or, according to another version, was summarily

* The *pros* and *cons* of the main question at issue are well stated in *Corinne:* "'Ah, pour heureux,' interrompit le Comte d'Erfeuil, 'je n'en crois rien: on n'est heureux que par ce qui est convenable. La société a, quoi qu'on fasse, beaucoup d'empire sur le bonheur; et ce qu'elle n'approuve pas, il ne faut jamais le faire.' 'On vivrait donc toujours pour ce que la société dira de nous,' reprit Oswald; 'et ce qu'on pense et ce qu'on sent ne servirait jamais de guide.' 'C'est très bien dit,' reprit le comte, 'trés-philosophiquement pensé; mais avec ces maximes là, l'on se perd; et quand l'amour est passé, le blâme de l'opinion reste. Moi qui vous parais léger, je ne ferai jamais rien qui puisse m'attirer la désapprobation du monde. On peut se permettre de petites libertés, d'aimables plaisanteries, qui annoncent de l'indépendance dans la manière d'agir; car, quand cela touche au sérieux.'—'Mais le sérieux,' repondit Lord Nelvil, 'c'est l'amour et le bonheur.'" — *Corinne,* liv. ix. ch. 1.

† In a note on the visit to Chatsworth with Johnson in July, 1774, Mrs. Piozzi says, "I remember Lady Keith, then ten years old, was the most amused of any of the party." She was born in September, 1764.

dismissed by Miss Thrale (afterwards Lady Keith), who fortunately was endowed with the precise description of qualities required by the emergency: clearness of judgment, high principle, firmness, and energy. She could not take up her abode with either of her guardians, one a bachelor under forty, the other the prototype of Briggs, the old miser in "Cæcilia." She could not accept Johnson's hospitality in Bolt Court, still tenanted by the survivors of his menagerie; where, a few months later, she sate by his death-bed and received his blessing. She therefore called to her aid an old nurse-maid, named Tib, who had been much trusted by her father, and with this homely but respectable duenna, she shut herself up in the house at Brighton, limited her expenses to her allowance of 200*l.* a-year, and resolutely set about the course of study which seemed best adapted to absorb attention and prevent her thoughts from wandering. Hebrew, Mathematics, Fortification, and Perspective have been named to me by one of her trusted friends as specimens of her acquirements and pursuits.

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we may."

In that solitary abode at Brighton, and in the companionship of Tib, may have been laid the foundation of a character than which few, through the changeful scenes of a long and prosperous life, have exercised more beneficial influence or inspired more genuine esteem. On coming of age, and being put into possession of her fortune, she hired a house in London,

and took her two eldest sisters to live with her. They had been at school whilst she was living at Brighton. The fourth and youngest, afterwards Mrs. Mostyn, had accompanied the mother. On the return of Mr. and Mrs. Piozzi, Miss Thrale made a point of paying them every becoming attention, and Piozzi was constantly dining with her. Latterly, she used to speak of him as a very worthy sort of man, who was not to blame for marrying a rich and distinguished woman who took a fancy to him. The other sisters seem to have adopted the same tone; and so far as I can learn, no one of them is open to the imputation of filial unkindness, or has suffered from maternal neglect in a manner to bear out Dr. Burney's forebodings by the result. Occasional expressions of querulousness are matters of course in family differences, and are seldom totally suppressed by the utmost exertion of good feeling and good sense.

On the 19th October, 1784, she writes to Mr. Lysons from Turin:—

"We are going to Alexandria, Genoa, and Pavia, and then to Milan for the winter, as Mr. Piozzi finds friends everywhere to delay us, and I hate hurry and fatigue; it takes away all one's attention. Lyons was a delightful place to me, and we were so feasted there by my husband's old acquaintances. The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland too paid us a thousand caressing civilities where we met with them, and we had no means of musical parties neither. The Prince of Sisterna came yesterday

to visit Mr. Piozzi, and present me with the key of his box at the opera for the time we stay at Turin. Here's honour and glory for you! When Miss Thrale hears of it, she will write perhaps; the other two are very kind and affectionate."

"Milan, Dec. 7.

"I correspond constantly and copiously with such of my daughters as are willing to answer my letters, and I have at last received one cold scrap from the eldest, which I instantly and tenderly replied to. Mrs. Lewis too, and Miss Nicholson, have had accounts of my health, for I found *them* disinterested and attached to me: those who led the stream, or watched which way it ran, that they might follow it, were not, I suppose, desirous of my correspondence, and till they are so, shall not be troubled with it."

Miss Nicholson was the lady left with the daughters, and Mrs. Piozzi could have heard no harm of her from them or others when she wrote thus. The same inference must be drawn from the allusions to this lady at subsequent periods. "Once more," she continues, "keep me out of the newspapers if you possibly can: they have given me many a miserable hour, and my enemies many a merry one: but I have not deserved public persecution, and am very happy to live in a place where one is free from unmerited insolence, such as London abounds with.

"'Illic credulitas, illic temerarius error.'

God bless you, and may you conquer the many-headed monster which I could never charm to silence."

The license of our press is a frequent topic of complaint. But here is a woman who had never placed herself before the public in any way so as to give them a right to discuss her conduct or affairs, not even as an author, made the butt of every description of offensive personality for months, with the tacit encouragement of the first moralist of the age.

On July 27th, 1785, she writes from Florence:—

"We celebrated our wedding anniversary two days ago with a magnificent dinner and concert, at which the Prince Corsini and his brother the Cardinal did us the honour of assisting, and wished us joy in the tenderest and politest terms. Lord and Lady Cowper, Lord Pembroke, and *all* the English indeed, doat on my husband, and show us every possible attention."

"I was tempted to observe," says the author of "Piozziana," "that I thought, as I still do, that Johnson's anger on the event of her second marriage was excited by some feeling of disappointment; and that I suspected he had formed some hope of attaching her to himself. It would be disingenuous on my part to attempt to repeat her answer. I forget it; but the impression on my mind is that she did not contradict me." Sir James Fellowes' marginal note on this passage is:—"This was an absurd notion, and I can undertake to say it was the last idea that ever entered her head; for when I once alluded to the subject, she ridiculed the idea: she told

me she always felt for Johnson the same respect and veneration as for a Pascal."

On the margin of the passage in which Boswell says, "Johnson's wishing to unite himself with this rich widow, was much talked of, but I believe without foundation," — she has written, "I believe so too!!" The report, however, was enough to bring into play the light artillery of the wits, one of whose best hits was an "Ode to Mrs. Thrale, by Samuel Johnson, LL.D:, on their approaching Nuptials," beginning:—

"If e'er my fingers touched the lyre,
In satire fierce, in pleasure gay,
Shall not my Thralia's smiles inspire,
Shall Sam refuse the sportive lay?

"My dearest lady, view your slave,
Behold him as your very *Scrub:*
Ready to write as author grave,
Or govern well the brewing tub.

"To rich felicity thus raised,
My bosom glows with amorous fire;
Porter no longer shall be praised,
'Tis I Myself am *Thrale's Entire.*"

She has written opposite these lines, "Whose fun was this? It is better than the other." The other was:

"Cervisial coctor's viduate dame,
Opinst thou this gigantick frame,
Procumbing at thy shrine,
Shall catinated by thy charms,
A captive in thy ambient arms
Perennially be thine."

She writes opposite: "Whose silly fun was this? Soame Jenyn's?"

If the notion ever crossed Johnson's mind, it must have been dismissed some time prior to her marriage, which took place four months before his death in his seventy-sixth year. But the threatened loss of a pleasant house may have had a good deal to do with the sorrowing indignation of his set. Her meditated social extinction amongst them might have been commemorated in the words of the French epitaph:—

"Ci git une de qui la vertu
Etait moins que la table encensée;
On ne plaint point la femme abattue
Mais bien la table renversée."

Which may be freely rendered:—

"Here lies one who adulation
By dinners more than virtues earn'd;
Whose friends mourned not her reputation—
But her table—overturned."

The following paragraph is copied from the note-book of the late Miss Williams Wynn*, who had recently been reading a large collection of Mrs. Piozzi's letters to a Welsh neighbour:—

* Daughter of Sir Watkyn Wynn (the fourth baronet) and granddaughter of George Grenville, the Minister. She was distinguished by her literary taste and acquirements, as well as highly esteemed for the uprightness of her character, the excellence of her understanding, and the kindness of her heart. Her journals and note-books, carefully kept during a long life passed in the best society, are full of interesting anecdotes and curious extracts from rare books and manuscripts. They are now in the possession of her niece, the Honourable Mrs. Rowley.

"*London, March*, 1825.—I have had an opportunity of talking to old Sir William Pepys on the subject of his old friend, Mrs. Piozzi, and from his conversation am more than ever impressed with the idea that she was one of the most inconsistent characters that ever existed. Sir William says he never met with any human being who possessed the talent of conversation in such a degree. I naturally felt anxious to know whether Piozzi could in any degree add to this pleasure, and found, as I expected, that he could not even understand her.

"Her infatuation for him seems perfectly unaccountable. Johnson in his rough (I may here call it brutal) manner said to her, 'Why, Ma'am, he is not only a stupid, ugly dog, but he is an old dog too.' Sir William says he really believes that she combated her inclination for him as long as possible; so long, that her senses would have failed her if she had attempted to resist any longer. She was perfectly aware of her degradation. One day, speaking to Sir William of some persons whom he had been in the habit of meeting continually at Streatham during the lifetime of Mr. Thrale, she said, not one of them has taken the smallest notice of me ever since: they dropped me before I had done anything wrong. Piozzi was literally at her elbow when she said this."

The hearsay of hearsay cannot be set against the uniform and concurrent testimony of her written professions and her conduct; which show that she never regarded her second marriage as a degradation, and

always took a high and independent, instead of a subdued or deprecating, tone with her alienated friends.

In a letter to a Welsh neighbour, near the end of her life, some time in 1818, she says:—

"Mrs. Mostyn (her youngest daughter) has written again on the road back to Italy, where she likes the Piozzis above all people, she says, *if they were not so proud of their family.* Would not that make one laugh two hours before one's own death? But I remember when Lady Egremont raised the whole nation's ill will here, while the Saxons were wondering how Count Bruhle could think of marrying a lady born Miss Carpenter. The Lombards doubted in the meantime of my being a gentlewoman by birth, because my first husband was a brewer. A pretty world, is it not? A Ship of Fooles, according to the old poem; and they will upset the vessel by and by."

This is not the language of one who wished to apologise for a misalliance.

As to Piozzi's want of youth and good looks, Johnson's knowledge of womankind, to say nothing of his self-love, should have prevented him from urging this as an objection, or as an aggravation of her offence. He might have recollected the Roman matron in Juvenal, who considers the world well lost for an old and disfigured prize-fighter; or he would have quoted Spenser's description of Lust: —

"Who rough and rude and filthy did appear,
Unseemly man to please fair lady's eye,
Yet he of ladies oft was loved dear,
When fairer faces were bid standen by:
Oh! who can tell the bent of woman's phantasy?"

Madame Campan, speaking of Caroline of Naples, the sister of Marie Antoinette, says, she had great reason to complain of the insolence of a Spaniard named Las Casas, whom the king, her father-in-law, had sent to persuade her to remove M. Acton from the conduct of affairs and from about her person. She had told him, to convince him of the nature of her sentiments, that she would have Acton painted and sculptured by the most celebrated artists of Italy, and send his bust and his portrait to the King of Spain, to prove to him that the desire of fixing a man of superior capacity could alone have induced her to confer the favour he enjoyed. Las Casas had dared to reply, that she would be taking useless trouble; that a man's ugliness did not always prevent him from pleasing, and that the King of Spain had too much experience to be ignorant that the caprices of a woman were inexplicable. Johnson may surely be allowed credit for as much knowledge of the sex as the King of Spain.

There is no need, however, for citing precedents or authorities on the point; for Piozzi was about forty-one or forty-two, a year or two younger than herself, and was not reputed ugly. Miss Seward (October, 1787) writes:

"I am become acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Piozzi. Her conversation is that bright wine of the intellects which has no lees. Dr. Johnson told me truth when he said she had more colloquial wit than most of our literary women; it is indeed a fountain of perpetual flow. But he did not tell me truth when he asserted

that Piozzi was an ugly dog, without particular skill in his profession. Mr. Piozzi is a handsome man, in middle life, with gentle, pleasing, unaffected manners, and with very eminent skill in his profession. Though he has not a powerful or fine-toned voice, he sings with transcending grace and expression. I am charmed with his perfect expression on his instrument. Surely the finest sensibilities must vibrate through his frame, since they breathe so sweetly through his song."

The concluding sentence contains what Partridge would call a *non sequitur*, for the finest musical sensibility may coexist with the most commonplace qualities. But the lady's evidence is clear and unequivocal on the essential point; and another passage from her letters may assist us in determining the precise nature of Johnson's feelings towards Mrs. Piozzi, and the extent to which his later language and conduct regarding her were influenced by pique:

"Love is the great softener of savage dispositions. Johnson had always a metaphysic passion for one princess or another: first, the rustic Lucy Porter, before he married her nauseous mother; next the handsome, but haughty, Molly Aston; next the sublimated, methodistic Hill Boothby, who read her bible in Hebrew; and lastly, the more charming Mrs. Thrale, with the beauty of the first, the learning of the second, and with more worth than a bushel of such sinners and such saints. It is ridiculously diverting to see the old elephant forsaking his nature before these princesses:

"'To make them mirth, use all his might, and writhe,
His mighty form disporting.'

"This last and long-enduring passion for Mrs. Thrale was, however, composed perhaps of cupboard love, Platonic love, and vanity tickled and gratified, from morn to night, by incessant homage. The two first ingredients are certainly oddly heterogeneous; but Johnson, in religion and politics, in love and in hatred, was composed of such opposite and contradictory materials, as never before met in the human mind. This is the reason why folk are never weary of talking, reading, and writing about a man —

"'So various that he seem'd to be,
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.'" *

In the teeth of Miss Seward's description of Piozzi, it would be difficult to maintain Lord Macaulay's statement that Mrs. Piozzi "fell in love with a music master from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could see anything to admire:" and the effect of the eloquent passage which succeeds would have been materially impaired by adherence to the facts —

"She did not conceal her joy when he (Johnson) left Streatham. She never pressed him to return; and if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself.

* Letters, vol. ii. p. 103.

In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left for ever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and the evil days which still remained to him were to run out."

Streatham had been let to Lord Shelburne, and they quitted it together. She never pressed him to return, because she never returned during his lifetime; for the same reason, he could not have come again as her guest, bidden or unbidden: and instead of leaving Streatham for his gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, he accompanied her, on the wonted footing of an inmate, first to Brighton, where we have seen him making himself particularly disagreeable to her friends, and then to Argyll Street.

The brilliant historian proceeds: —

"Here (Bolt Court) in June, 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which however he recovered, and which does not appear to have impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler; that all London was crying shame upon her; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron and the two pictures in 'Hamlet.'

He vehemently said he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated, had ceased to exist."

In his last letter on her marriage, Johnson admits that he has no pretence to resent it, as it has not been injurious to him, and says: "Whatever I can contribute to your happiness I am ever ready to repay, for that kindness which soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched." If, directly after writing this, he vowed to forget her existence, and flung every memorial of her into the fire, he stands self-convicted of ingratitude and deceit. The only proof that he did anything of the sort is a passage in Madame D'Arblay's diary: "We talked of poor Mrs. Thrale, but only for a moment; for I saw him so greatly moved, and with such severity of displeasure, that I hastened to start another subject, and he solemnly enjoined me to mention that no more." This was towards the end of November, a few weeks before he died, and he might be excused for being angry at the introduction of any agitating topic.

His affection for Mrs. Piozzi was far from being a deep, devoted, or absorbing feeling at any time; and the gloom which settled upon the evening of his days was owing to his infirmities and his dread of

death, not to the loosening of cherished ties, nor to the compelled solitude of a confined dwelling in Bolt Court. The plain matter of fact is that, during the last two years of his life, he was seldom a month together at his own house, unless when the state of his health prevented him from enjoying the hospitality of his friends. When the fatal marriage was announced, he was planning what Boswell calls a jaunt into the country; and in a letter dated Lichfield, Oct. 4, 1784, he says: "I passed the first part of the summer at Oxford (with Dr. Adams); afterwards I went to Lichfield, then to Ashbourne (Dr. Taylor's), and a week ago I returned to Lichfield."

In the journal which he kept for Dr. Brocklesby, he writes, Oct. 20: "The town is my element; there are my friends, there are my books to which I have not yet bid farewell, and there are my amusements. Sir Joshua told me long ago that my vocation was to public life; and I hope still to keep my station, till God shall bid me *Go in peace.*"

Thrale died on the 4th of April. "On Friday, April 6, (writes Boswell), he (Johnson) carried me to dine at a club which at his desire had been lately formed at the Queen's Arms." In April, 1784, a year and a half after his heart was broken by the alleged expulsion from Streatham, Johnson sends a regular diary of his feelings, and proceedings to Mrs. Thrale. One item may suffice:

"I received this morning your magnificent fish (*antè*, p. 53), and in the afternoon your apology for not sending it. I have invited the Hooles and Miss Burney to dine upon it to-morrow."

After another visit to Dr. Adams at Pembroke College, he returned about the middle of November to London, where he died December 13th, 1784. The proximate cause of his death was dropsy; and there is not the smallest sign of its having been accelerated or embittered by unkindness or neglect.

If he chose to repudiate and denounce one "whose kindness had soothed twenty years of a life radically wretched," because she refused to submit to his dictation in a matter of life and death to her and of comparative indifference to him, the severance of the tie was entirely his own act. In a letter to Mr. S. Lysons from Milan, dated December 7th, 1784, which proves that she was not wasting her time in "concerts and lemonade parties," she says:—"My next letter shall talk of the libraries and botanical gardens, and twenty other clever things here. I wish you a comfortable Christmas, and a happy beginning of the year 1785. Do not neglect Dr. Johnson: you will never see any other mortal so wise or so good. I keep his picture in my chamber, and his works on my chimney."

> "Forgiveness to the injured doth belong,
> But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong."

The reader will not fail to admire the rhetorical skill with which the banishment from Streatham, the gloomy and desolate home, the marriage with the Italian fiddler, the painful and melancholy death, and the merry Christmas, have been grouped together with the view of giving picturesqueness, impressive unity, and

damnatory vigour to the sketch. "Action, action, action," says the orator; "effect, effect, effect," says the historian. Give Archimedes a place to stand on, and he would move the world. Give Talleyrand a line of a man's handwriting, and he would engage to ruin him. Give Lord Macaulay a hint, a fancy, an insulated fact or phrase, a scrap of a journal, or the tag end of a song, and on it, by the abused prerogative of genius, he would construct a theory of national or personal character, which should confer undying glory or inflict indelible disgrace.

Mrs. Piozzi's life in Italy is sketched in her best manner by her own lively pen. Her confidence in Piozzi was amply justified by the result. She was in debt when she married him. Before their return to England, all her pecuniary embarrassments were removed by his judicious economy; although, her income being entirely in his power, nothing would have been easier for him than to make a purse for his family or himself, or to dazzle his countrymen by his splendour.

On February 3rd, 1785, Walpole writes from London to Sir Horace Mann at Florence:

"I have very lately been lent a volume of poems composed and printed at Florence, in which another of our ex-heroines, Mrs. Piozzi, has a considerable share; her associates three of the English bards who assisted in the little garland which Ramsay the painter sent me. The present is a plump octavo; and if you have not sent me a copy by your nephew I should be glad if you could get one for me: not for the merit of the verses,

which are moderate enough and faint imitations of our good poets; but for a short and sensible and genteel preface by La Piozzi, from whom I have just seen a very clever letter to Mrs. Montagu, to disavow a jackanapes who has lately made a noise here, one Boswell, 'by Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson.' In a day or two we expect another collection by the same Signora."

Her associates were Greathead, Merry, and Parsons. The volume in question was "The Florence Miscellany." "A copy," says Mr. Lowndes, "having fallen into the hands of W. Gifford, gave rise to his admirable satire of the 'Baviad and Mœviad.'" *

In his Journal of the Tour to the Hebrides, Boswell makes Johnson say of Mrs. Montagu's "Essay on Shakespeare:" "Reynolds is fond of her book, and I wonder at it; for neither I, nor Beauclerc, nor Mrs. Thrale could get through it." This is what Mrs. Piozzi wrote to disavow, so far as she was personally concerned. The other collection expected from her whilst still in Italy was her "Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, during the last Twenty Years of his Life. Printed for T. Cadell in the Strand, 1786."

In her Travels she says:—"I have here (Leghorn) finished that work which chiefly brought me here, the 'Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson's Life.' It is from this port they take their flight for England whilst we retire for refreshment to the Bagni de Pisa."

The book attracted much attention in the literary

* The "Bibliographer's Manual," p. 534. The Preface (praised by Walpole) is reprinted amongst her literary remains.

and fashionable circles of London; and whilst some affected to discover in it the latent signs of wounded vanity and pique, others vehemently impugned its accuracy. Foremost amongst her assailants stood Boswell, who had an obvious motive for depreciating her, and he attempts to destroy her authority, first, by quoting Johnson's supposed imputations on her veracity; and secondly, by individual instances of her alleged departure from truth.

Thus, Johnson is reported to have said:—"It is amazing, Sir, what deviations there are from precise truth, in the account which is given of almost everything. I told Mrs. Thrale, You have so little anxiety about truth that you never tax your memory with the exact thing."

Her proneness to exaggerated praise especially excited his indignation, and he endeavours to make her responsible for his rudeness on the strength of it.

"Mrs. Thrale gave high praise to Mr. Dudley Long (now North). *Johnson.* 'Nay, my dear lady, don't talk so. Mr. Long's character is very *short?* It is nothing. He fills a chair. He is a man of genteel appearance, and that is all. I know nobody who blasts by praise as you do: for whenever there is exaggerated praise, every body is set against a character. They are provoked to attack it. Now there is Pepys; you praised that man with such disproportion, that I was incited to lessen him, perhaps more than he deserves. *His blood is upon your head.* By the same principle, your malice defeats itself; for your censure is too violent. And yet (looking to her with a leering smile) she is the first woman in the world, could she but restrain that wicked tongue

of hers; — she would be the only woman, could she but command that little whirligig.'"

Opposite the words I have printed in italics she has written: "An expression he would not have used; no, not for worlds."

In Boswell's note of a visit to Streatham in 1778, we find: —

"Next morning, while we were at breakfast, Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practised with the utmost conscientiousness: I mean a strict attention to truth even in the most minute particulars. 'Accustom your children,' said he, 'constantly to this: if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them: you do not know where deviation from truth will end.' *Boswell.* 'It may come to the door: and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened.' Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say 'Nay, this is too much. If Dr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea, I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day: but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching.' *Johnson.* 'Well, Madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth, than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world.'"

Now for the illustrative incident, which occurred during the same visit: —

"I had before dinner repeated a ridiculous story told me by an old man, who had been a passenger with me in the stage-coach to-day. Mrs. Thrale, having taken occasion to allude to it in talking to me, called it, 'The story told you by the old *woman*.' 'Now, Madam,' said I, 'give me leave to catch you in the fact: it was not an old *woman*, but an old *man*, whom I mentioned as having told me this.' I presumed to take an opportunity, in the presence of Johnson, of showing this lively lady how ready she was, unintentionally, to deviate from exact authenticity of narration."

In the margin: "Mrs. Thrale knew there was no such thing as an Old Man: when a man gets superannuated, they call him an old Woman."

The remarks on the value of truth attributed to Johnson are just and sound in the main, but when they are pointed against character, they must be weighed in reference to the very high standard he habitually insisted upon. He would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he was. "A servant's strict regard for truth," he continued, "must be weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know that it is merely a form of denial; but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for me, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for himself?"

One of his townspeople, Mr. Wickens, of Lichfield, was walking with him in a small meandering shrubbery formed so as to hide the termination, and observed that

it might be taken for an extensive labyrinth, but that it would prove a deception, though it was, indeed, not an unpardonable one. "Sir," exclaimed Johnson, "don't tell me of deception; a lie, Sir, is a lie, whether it be a lie to the eye or a lie to the ear." Whilst he was in one of these paradoxical humours, there was no pleasing him; and he has been known to insult persons of respectability for repeating current accounts of events, sounding new and strange, which turned out to be literally true; such as the red-hot shot at Gibraltar, or the effects of the earthquake at Lisbon. Yet he could be lax when it suited him, as speaking of epitaphs: "The writer of an epitaph should not be considered as saying nothing but what is strictly true. Allowance must be made for some degree of exaggerated praise. In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath." Is he upon oath in narrating an anecdote? or could he do more than swear to the best of his recollection and belief, if he was. Boswell's notes of conversations are wonderful results of a peculiar faculty, or combination of faculties, but the utmost they can be suffered to convey is the substance of what took place, in an exceedingly condensed shape, lighted up at intervals by the *ipsissima verba* of the speaker.

"Whilst he went on talking triumphantly," says Boswell, "I was fixed in admiration, and said to Mrs. Thrale, 'O for short-hand to take this down!' 'You'll carry it all in your head,' said she; 'a long head is as good as short-hand.'"* On his boasting of the effi-

* This happened March 21st, 1783, in Argyll Street, the year after Johnson had bidden farewell to Streatham.

ciency of his own system of short-hand to Johnson, he was put to the test and failed.

Mrs. Piozzi at once admits and accounts for the inferiority of her own collection of anecdotes, when she denounces "a trick which I have seen played on common occasions, of sitting steadily down at the other end of the room, to write at the moment what should be said in company, either *by* Dr. Johnson or *to* him, I never practised myself, nor approved of in another. There is something so ill-bred, and so inclining to treachery in this conduct, that were it commonly adopted, all confidence would soon be exiled from society, and a conversation assembly room would become tremendous as a court of justice." This is a hit at Boswell, who (as regards Johnson himself) had full licence to take notes the best way he could. Madame D'Arblay's are much fuller, and bear a suspicious resemblance to the dialogues in her novels.

Mrs. Piozzi prefaces some instances of Johnson's rudeness and harshness by the remark, that "he did not hate the persons he treated with roughness, or despise them whom he drove from him by apparent scorn. He really loved and respected many whom he would not suffer to love him." Boswell echoes the remark, multiplies the instances, and then accuses Mrs. Piozzi of misrepresenting their friend. After mentioning a discourteous reply to Robertson the historian, which was subsequently confirmed by Boswell, she proceeds to show that Johnson was no gentler to herself or those for whom he had the greatest regard. "When

I one day lamented the loss of a first cousin, killed in America, 'Prithee, my dear (said he), have done with canting: how would the world be worse for it, I may ask, if all your relations were at once spitted like larks and roasted for Presto's supper?'—Presto was the dog that lay under the table." To this Boswell opposes the version given by Baretti, in the course of an angry invective, which Mr. Croker justly designates as brutal:—

"Mrs. Thrale, while supping very heartily upon larks, laid down her knife and fork, and abruptly exclaimed, 'O, my dear Johnson! do you know what has happened? The last letters from abroad have brought us an account that our poor cousin's head was taken off by a cannon-ball.' Johnson, who was shocked both at the fact and her light unfeeling manner of mentioning it, replied, 'Madam, it would give *you* very little concern if all your relations were spitted like those larks, and dressed for Presto's supper.'"

This version, assuming its truth, aggravates the personal rudeness of the speech. But her marginal notes on the passage are: "Boswell appealing to Baretti for a testimony of the truth is comical enough! I never addressed him (Johnson) so familiarly in my life. I never did eat any supper, and there were no larks to eat."

"Upon mentioning this story to my friend Mr. Wilkes," adds Boswell, "he pleasantly matched it with the following sentimental anecdote. He was invited by a young man of fashion at Paris to sup with him and a lady who had been for some time his mistress, but with whom he

was going to part. He said to Mr. Wilkes that he really felt very much for her, she was in such distress, and that he meant to make her a present of 200 louis d'ors. Mr. Wilkes observed the behaviour of Mademoiselle, who sighed indeed very piteously, and assumed every pathetic air of grief, but ate no less than three French pigeons, which are as large as English partridges, besides other things. Mr. Wilkes whispered the gentleman, 'We often say in England, "Excessive sorrow is exceeding dry," but I never heard "Excessive sorrow is exceeding hungry." Perhaps one hundred will do.' The gentleman took the hint." Mrs. Piozzi's marginal ebullition is: "Very like my hearty supper of larks, who never eat supper at all, nor was ever a hot dish seen on the table after dinner at Streatham Park."

Two instances of inaccuracy, announced as particularly worthy of notice, are supplied by "an eminent critic," understood to be Malone, who begins by stating, "I have often been in his (Johnson's) company, and never *once* heard him say a severe thing to any one; and many others can attest the same." Malone had lived very little with Johnson, and to appreciate his evidence, we should know what he and Boswell would agree to call a severe thing. Once, on Johnson's observing that they had "good talk" on the "preceding evening," "Yes, Sir," replied Boswell, "you tossed and gored several persons." Do tossing and goring come within the definition of severity? In another place he says, "I have seen even Mrs. Thrale stunned;" and Miss Reynolds relates that "One day

at her own table he spoke so very roughly to her, that every one present was surprised that she could bear it so placidly; and on the ladies withdrawing, I expressed great astonishment that Dr. Johnson should speak so harshly to her, but to this she said no more than 'Oh, dear, good man.'"

One of the two instances of Mrs. Piozzi's inaccuracy is as follows: — "He once bade a very celebrated lady (Hannah More) who praised him with too much zeal perhaps, or perhaps too strong an emphasis (which always offended him) consider what her flattery was worth before she choaked *him* with it."

Now, exclaims Mr. Malone, let the genuine anecdote be contrasted with this:—

"The person thus represented as being harshly treated, though a very celebrated lady, was *then* just come to London from an obscure situation in the country. At Sir Joshua Reynolds's one evening, she met Dr. Johnson. She very soon began to pay her court to him in the most fulsome strain. 'Spare me, I beseech you, dear Madam,' was his reply. She still *laid it on.* 'Pray, Madam, let us have no more of this,' he rejoined. Not paying any attention to these warnings, she continued still her eulogy. At length, provoked by this indelicate and *vain* obtrusion of compliments, he exclaimed, 'Dearest lady, consider with yourself what your flattery is worth, before you bestow it so freely.'

"How different does this story appear, when accompanied with all those circumstances which really belong

to it, but which Mrs. Thrale either did not know, or has suppressed!"

How do we know that these circumstances really belong to it? what essential difference do they make? and how do they prove Mrs. Thrale's inaccuracy, who expressly states the nature of the probable, though certainly most inadequate, provocation.

The other instance is a story which she tells us on Mr. Thrale's authority, of an argument between Johnson and a gentleman, which the master of the house, a nobleman, tried to cut short by saying loud enough for the Doctor to hear, "Our friend has no meaning in all this, except just to relate at the Club to-morrow how he teased Johnson at dinner to-day; this is all to do himself honour." "No, upon my word," replied the other, "I see no honour in it, whatever you may do." "Well, Sir," returned Mr. Johnson sternly, "you do not see the honour, I am sure I feel the disgrace." Malone, on the authority of a nameless friend, asserts that it was not at the house of a nobleman, that the gentleman's remark was uttered in a low tone, and that Johnson made no retort at all. As Mrs. Piozzi could hardly have invented the story, the sole question is, whether Mr. Thrale or Malone's friend was right. She has written in the margin: "It was the house of Thomas Fitzmaurice, son to Lord Shelburne, and Pottinger the hero."

"Mrs. Piozzi," says Boswell, "has given a similar misrepresentation of Johnson's treatment of Garrick in this particular (as to the Club), as if he had used these contemptuous expressions: 'If Garrick does

apply, I'll blackball him. Surely one ought to sit in a society like ours —

"Unelbow'd by a gamester, pimp, or player.'"

The lady retorts, "He did say so, and Mr. Thrale stood astonished." Johnson was constantly depreciating the profession of the stage.

Whilst finding fault with Mrs. Piozzi for inaccuracy in another place, Boswell supplies an additional example of Johnson's habitual disregard of the ordinary rules of good breeding in society :—

"A learned gentleman [Dr. Vansittart], who, in the course of conversation, wished to inform us of this simple fact, that the council upon the circuit of Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took, I suppose, seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He in a plenitude of phrase told us, that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town-hall; that by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers; that the lodgings of the council were near the town-hall; and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility. Johnson sat in great impatience till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out (playfully however), 'It is a pity, Sir, that you have not seen a lion; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth.'"

He complains in a note that Mrs. Piozzi, to whom he told the anecdote, has related it "as if the gentleman had given the natural history of the mouse." But, in

a letter to Johnson she tells *him* "I have seen the man that saw the mouse," and he replies "Poor V——, he is a good man, &c.;" so that her version of the story is the best authenticated. Opposite Boswell's aggressive paragraph she has written: "I saw old Mitchell of Brighthelmstone affront him (Johnson) terribly once about fleas. Johnson being tired of the subject expressed his impatience of it with coarseness. 'Why, Sir,' said the old man, 'why should not Flea bite o'me be treated as Phlebotomy? It empties the capillary vessels.'"

Boswell's Life of Johnson was not published till 1791; but the controversy kindled by the Tour to the Hebrides and the Anecdotes, raged fiercely enough to fix general attention and afford ample scope for ridicule: "The Bozzi, &c. subjects," writes Hannah More in April 1786, "are not exhausted, though everybody seems heartily sick of them. Everybody, however, conspires not to let them drop. *That*, the Cagliostro, and the Cardinal's necklace, spoil all conversation, and destroyed a very good evening at Mr. Pepys' last night." In one of Walpole's letters about the same time we find:

"All conversation turns on a trio of culprits — Hastings, Fitzgerald, and the Cardinal de Rohan. . . So much for tragedy. Our comic performers are Boswell and Dame Piozzi. The cock biographer has fixed a direct lie on the hen, by an advertisement in which he affirms that he communicated his manuscript to Madame Thrale, and that she made no objection to what he says of her low opinion of Mrs. Montagu's book. It

is very possible that it might not be her real opinion, but was uttered in compliment to Johnson, or for fear he should spit in her face if she disagreed with him; but how will she get over her not objecting to the passage remaining? She must have known, by knowing Boswell, and by having a similar intention herself, that his 'Anecdotes' would certainly be published: in short, the ridiculous woman will be strangely disappointed. As she must have heard that *the whole first impression of her book was sold the first day*, no doubt she expected on her landing, to be received like the governor of Gibraltar, and to find the road strewed with branches of palm. She, and Boswell, and their Hero, are the joke of the public. A Dr. Walcot, *soi-disant* Peter Pindar, has published a burlesque eclogue, in which Boswell and the Signora are the interlocutors, and all the absurdest passages in the works of both are ridiculed. The print-shops teem with satiric prints in them: one in which Boswell, as a monkey, is riding on Johnson, the bear, has this witty inscription, 'My Friend *delineavit*.' But enough of these mountebanks."

What Walpole calls the absurdest passages are precisely those which possess most interest for posterity; namely, the minute personal details, which bring Johnson home to the mind's eye. Peter Pindar, however, was simply acting in his vocation when he made the best of them, as in the following lines. His satire is in the form of a Town Eclogue in which Bozzy and

Piozzi contend in anecdotes with Hawkins for umpire: —

BOZZY.

"One Thursday morn did Doctor Johnson wake,
And call out 'Lanky, Lanky,' by mistake—
But recollecting—'Bozzy, Bozzy,' cry'd—
For in *contractions* Johnson took a pride!"

MADAME PIOZZI.

"I ask'd him if he knock'd Tom Osborn down;
As such a tale was current through the town,—
Says I, 'Do tell me, Doctor, what befell.'—
'Why, dearest lady, there is nought to *tell*:
'I ponder'd on the *proper'st* mode to *treat* him—
'The dog was impudent, and so I beat him!
'Tom, like a fool, proclaim'd his fancied wrongs;
'*Others*, that I belabour'd, held their tongues.'"

"Did any one, that he was *happy*, cry—
Johnson would tell him plumply, 'twas a lie.
A Lady told him she was really so;
On which he sternly answer'd, 'Madam, no!
'Sickly you are, and ugly—foolish, poor;
'And therefore can't be happy, I am sure.
''Twould make a fellow hang himself, whose ear
'Were, from such creatures, forc'd such stuff to hear.'"

BOZZY.

"Lo, when we landed on the Isle of Mull,
The megrims got into the Doctor's skull:
With such bad humours he began to fill,
I thought he would not go to Icolmkill:
But lo! those megrims (wonderful to utter!)
Were banish'd all by tea and bread and butter!"

At last they get angry, and tell each other a few home truths: —

BOZZY.

"How could your folly tell, so void of truth,
That miserable story of the youth,
Who, in your book, of Doctor Johnson begs
Most seriously to know if cats laid eggs!"

MADAME PIOZZI.

"*Who* told of Mistress Montague the lie—
So palpable a falsehood?—Bozzy, fie!"

BOZZY.

"*Who*, madd'ning with an anecdotic itch,
Declar'd that Johnson call'd his mother *b-tch?*"

MADAME PIOZZI.

"*Who*, from M'Donald's rage to save his snout,
Cut twenty lines of defamation out?"

BOZZY.

"*Who* would have said a word about Sam's wig,
Or told the story of the peas and pig?
Who would have told a tale so very flat,
Of Frank the Black, and Hodge the mangy cat?"

MADAME PIOZZI.

"Good me! you're grown at once confounded *tender;*
Of Doctor Johnson's fame a *fierce* defender:
I'm sure you've mention'd many a pretty story
Not much redounding to the Doctor's glory.
Now for a *saint* upon us you would palm him—
First *murder* the poor man, and then *embalm him!*'

BOZZY.

"Well, Ma'am! since all that Johnson said or wrote,
You hold so sacred, how have you forgot
To grant the wonder-hunting world a reading
Of Sam's Epistle, just before your *wedding:*
Beginning thus, (in strains not form'd to flatter)
'Madam,
'*If that most ignominious matter*
'*Be not concluded*'—
Farther shall I say?
No—we shall have it from *yourself* some day,
To justify your passion for the *Youth,*
With all the charms of eloquence and truth."

MADAME PIOZZI.

"What was my marriage, Sir, to *you* or *him?*
He tell me what to do!—a pretty whim!

He, to *propriety*, (the beast) *resort!*
As well might *elephants preside* at *court*.
Lord! let the world to *damn* my match *agree*;
Good God! James Boswell, what's *that world* to *me?*
The folks who paid respects to Mistress Thrale,
Fed on her pork, poor souls! and swill'd her ale,
May *sicken* at Piozzi, nine in ten—
Turn up the nose of scorn—good God! what then?
For *me*, the Dev'l may fetch their souls so *great*;
They keep their homes, and *I*, thank God, my meat.
When they, poor owls! shall beat their cage, a jail,
I, unconfin'd, shall spread my peacock tail;
Free as the birds of air, enjoy my ease,
Choose my own food, and see what climes I please.
I suffer only—if I'm in the wrong:
So, now, you prating puppy, hold your tongue."

Walpole's opinion of the book itself had been expressed in a preceding letter, dated March 28th, 1786:—

"Two days ago appeared Madame Piozzi's Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson. I am lamentably disappointed—in her, I mean: not in him. I had conceived a favourable opinion of her capacity. But this new book is wretched; a high-varnished preface to a heap of rubbish in a very vulgar style, and too void of method even for such a farrago. . . The Signora talks of her doctor's *expanded* mind and has contributed her mite to show that never mind was narrower. In fact, the poor woman is to be pitied: he was mad, and his disciples did not find it out, but have unveiled all his defects; nay, have exhibited all his brutalities as wit, and his worst conundrums as humour. Judge! The Piozzi relates that a young man asking him

where Palmyra was, he replied: 'In Ireland: it was a bog planted with palm trees.'"

Walpole's statement that the whole first-impression was sold the first day is confirmed by one of her letters, and may be placed alongside of a statement of Johnson's reported in the book. Clarissa being mentioned as a perfect character, "on the contrary (said he) you may observe that there is always something which she prefers to truth. Fielding's Amelia was the most pleasing heroine of all the romances; but that vile broken nose never cured, ruined the sale of perhaps the only book, which being printed off betimes one morning, a new edition was called for before night."

In April, 1786, Hannah More writes: —

"Mrs. Piozzi's book is much in fashion. It is indeed entertaining, but there are two or three passages exceedingly unkind to Garrick which filled me with indignation. If Johnson had been envious enough to utter them, she might have been prudent enough to suppress them."

In a preceding letter she had said: —

"Boswell tells me he is printing anecdotes of Dr. Johnson, not his *life*, but, as he has the vanity to call it, his *pyramid*. I besought his tenderness for our virtuous and most revered departed friend, and begged he would mitigate some of his asperities. He said roughly, he would not cut off his claws, nor make a tiger a cat to please anybody." The retort will serve for both Mrs. Piozzi and himself.

The copy of the "Anecdotes" in my possession has

two inscriptions on the blank leaves before the title-page. The one is in Mrs. Piozzi's handwriting: "This little dirty book is kindly accepted by Sir James Fellowes from his obliged friend, H. L. Piozzi, 14th February, 1816;" the other: "This copy of the 'Anecdotes' was found at Bath, covered with dirt, the book having been long out of print *, and after being bound was presented to me by my excellent friend, H. L. P. (signed) J. F."

It is enriched by marginal notes in her handwriting, which enable us to fill up a few puzzling blanks, besides supplying some information respecting men and books, which will be prized by all lovers of literature.

One of the anecdotes runs thus: "I asked him once concerning the conversation powers of a gentleman with whom I was myself unacquainted. 'He talked to me at the Club one day (replies our Doctor) concerning Catiline's conspiracy; so I withdrew my attention, and thought about Tom Thumb.'"

In the margin is written "Charles James Fox." Mr. Croker came to the conclusion that the gentleman was Mr. Vesey. Boswell says that Fox never talked with any freedom in the presence of Johnson, who accounted for his reserve by suggesting that a man who is used to the applause of the House of Commons, has no wish for that of a private company. But the real cause was his sensitiveness to rudeness, his own temper being singularly sweet. By an odd coincidence he occupied the presidential chair at the Club on the evening when John-

* The "Anecdotes" were reprinted by Messrs. Longman in 1856, and form part of their "Traveller's Library."

son emphatically declared every Whig to be a scoundrel. Again: "On an occasion of less consequence, when he turned his back on Lord Bolingbroke in the rooms at Brighthelmstone, he made this excuse: 'I am not obliged, Sir,' said he to Mr. Thrale, who stood fretting, 'to find reasons for respecting the rank of him who will not condescend to declare it by his dress or some other visible mark: what are stars and other signs of superiority made for?' The next evening, however, he made us comical amends, by sitting by the same nobleman, and haranguing very loudly about the nature, and use, and abuse, of divorces. Many people gathered round them to hear what was said, and when my husband called him away, and told him to whom he had been talking, received an answer which I will not write down."

The marginal note is: "He said: 'Why, Sir, I did not know the man. If he will put on no other mark of distinction, let us make him wear his horns.'" Lord Bolingbroke had divorced his wife, afterwards Lady Diana Beauclerc, for infidelity.

A marginal note naming the lady of quality mentioned in the following anecdote, verifies Mr. Croker's conjectural statement concerning her: —

"For a lady of quality, since dead, who received us at her husband's seat in Wales, with less attention than he had long been accustomed to, he had a rougher denunciation: 'That woman,' cries Johnson, 'is like sour small beer, the beverage of her table, and produce of the wretched country she lives in: like that, she could

never have been a good thing, and even that bad thing is spoiled.' This was in the same vein of asperity, and I believe with something like the same provocation, that he observed of a Scotch lady, 'that she resembled a dead nettle; were she alive,' said he, 'she would sting.'"

From similar notes we learn that the "somebody" who declared Johnson a tremendous converser was George Garrick; and that it was Dr. Delap, of Sussex, to whom, when lamenting the tender state of his *inside*, he cried out: "Dear Doctor, do not be like the spider, man, and spin conversation thus incessantly out of thy own bowels." *

On the margin of the page in which Hawkins Browne is commended as the most delightful of conversers, she has written: "Who wrote the 'Imitation of all the Poets' in his own ludicrous verses, praising the pipe of tobacco. Of Hawkins Browne, the pretty Mrs. Cholmondeley said she was soon tired; because the first hour he was so dull, there was no bearing him; the second he was so witty, there was no bearing him; the third he was so drunk, there was no bearing him." †

* Lord Melbourne complained of two ladies of quality, sisters, that they told him too much of their "natural history."

† Query, whether this is the gentleman immortalised by Peter Plymley: "In the third year of his present Majesty (George III.) and in the thirtieth of his own age, Mr. Isaac Hawkins Brown, then upon his travels, danced one evening at the court of Naples. His dress was a volcano silk, with lava buttons. Whether (as the Neapolitan wits said) he had studied dancing under Saint Vitus, or whether David, dancing in a linen vest, was his model, is not known; but Mr. Brown danced with such inconceivable alacrity

In the "Anecdotes" she relates that one day in Wales she meant to please Johnson with a dish of young peas. "Are they not charming?" said I, while he was eating them. "Perhaps," said he, "they would be so—to a pig;" meaning (according to the marginal note), because they were too little boiled.

"Of the various states and conditions of humanity, he despised none more, I think, than the man who marries for maintenance: and of a friend who made his alliance on no higher principles, he said once, 'Now has that fellow,' it was a nobleman of whom we were speaking, 'at length obtained a certainty of three meals a day, and for that certainty, like his brother dog in the fable, he will get his neck galled for life with a collar.'" The nobleman was Lord Sandys.

"He recommended, on something like the same principle, that when one person meant to serve another, he should not go about it slily, or, as we say, underhand, out of a false idea of delicacy, to surprise one's friend with an unexpected favour; 'which, ten to one,' says he, 'fails to oblige your acquaintance, who had some reasons against such a mode of obligation, which you might have known but for that superfluous cunning which you think an elegance. Oh! never be seduced by such silly pretences,' continued he; 'if a wench wants a good gown, do not give her a fine smelling-

and vigour, that he threw the Queen of Naples into convulsions of laughter, which terminated in a miscarriage, and changed the dynasty of the Neapolitan throne."

bottle, because that is more delicate: as I once knew a lady lend the key of her library to a poor scribbling dependant, as if she took the woman for an ostrich that could digest iron.'" This lady was Mrs. Montague.

"I mentioned two friends who were particularly fond of looking at themselves in a glass—'They do not surprise me at all by so doing,' said Johnson: 'they see, reflected in that glass, men who have risen from almost the lowest situations in life; one to enormous riches, the other to everything this world can give—rank, fame, and fortune. They see, likewise, men who have merited their advancement by the exertion and improvement of those talents which God had given them; and I see not why they should avoid the mirror.'"

The one, she writes, was Mr. Cator, the other, Wedderburne. Another great lawyer and very ugly man, Dunning, Lord Ashburton, was remarkable for the same peculiarity, and had his walls covered with looking-glasses. His personal vanity was excessive; and his boast that a celebrated courtesan had died with one of his letters in her hand, provoked one of Wilkes's happiest repartees.

Opposite a passage descriptive of Johnson's conversation, she has written: "We used to say to one another familiarly at Streatham Park, 'Come, let us go into the library, and make Johnson speak Ramblers.'"

The Piozzis returned from Italy in March, 1787, and soon after their arrival hired a house in Hanover Square, where they resided till May, 1790, when they removed

to Streatham. The Johnsonian circle was broken up, and some of its most distinguished members were no more. Still it is curious to mark how this woman who had "fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen to a land where she was unknown," was received where she was best known after an absence of less than three years. According to the Autobiography, her reception was in all respects satisfactory, and it only depended upon herself to resume her former place in society. A few extracts from her Diary will help to show how far this conclusion was well founded or the contrary:

"1787, *May* 1*st*.—It was not wrong to come home after all, but very right. The Italians would have said we were afraid to face England, and the English would have said we were confined abroad in prisons or convents or some stuff. I find Mr. Smith (one of our daughter's guardians) told that poor baby Cecilia a fine staring tale how my husband locked me up at Milan and fed me on bread and water, to make the child hate Mr. Piozzi. Good God! What infamous proceeding was this! My husband never saw the fellow, so could not have provoked him."

"*May* 19*th*.—We had a fine assembly last night indeed: in my best days I never had finer; there were near a hundred people in the rooms which were besides much admired."

"1788, *January* 1*st*.—How little I thought this day four years that I should celebrate this 1st of January, 1788, here at Bath, surrounded with friends and ad-

mirers? The public partial to *me*, and almost every individual whose kindness is worth wishing for, sincerely attached to my husband."

"Mrs. Byron is converted by Piozzi's assiduity, she really likes him now: and sweet Mrs. Lambert told everybody at Bath she was in love with him."

"I have passed a delightful winter in spite of them, caressed by my friends, adored by my husband, amused with every entertainment that is going forward: what need I think about three sullen Misses? . . . and yet!"——

"*August* 1*st*.—Baretti has been grossly abusive in the 'European Magazine' to me: *that* hurts me but little; what shocks me is that those treacherous Burneys should abet and puff him. He is a most ungrateful because unprincipled wretch; but I *am* sorry that anything belonging to Dr. Burney should be so monstrously wicked."

"1789, *January* 17*th*.—Mrs. Siddons dined in a coterie of my unprovoked enemies yesterday at Porteus's. She mentioned our concerts, and the Erskines lamented their absence from one we gave two days ago, at which Mrs. Garrick was present and gave a good report to the *Blues*. Charming Blues! blue with venom I think; I suppose they begin to be ashamed of their paltry behaviour. Mrs. Garrick, more prudent than any of them, left a loophole for returning friendship to fasten through, and it *shall* fasten: that woman has lived a *very wise life*, regular and steady in her conduct, attentive to every word she speaks and every step she treads, de-

corous in her manners and graceful in her person. My fancy forms the Queen just like Mrs. Garrick: they are countrywomen and have, as the phrase is, had a hard card to play; yet never lurched by tricksters nor subdued by superior powers, they will rise from the table unhurt either by others or themselves . . . having played a *saving game*. *I* have run risques to be sure, that I have; yet —

> "'When after some distinguished leap
> She drops her pole and seems to slip,
> Straight gath'ring all her active strength,
> She rises higher half her length;'

and better than *now* I have never stood with the world in general, I believe. May the books just sent to press confirm the partiality of the Public!"

"1789, *January*.—I have a great deal more prudence than people suspect me for: they think I act by chance while I am doing nothing in the world unintentionally, and have never, I dare say, in these last fifteen years uttered a word to husband, or child, or servant, or friend, without being very careful what it should be. Often have I spoken what I have repented after, but that was want of *judgment*, not of *meaning*. What I said I meant to say at the time, and thought it best to say. . . . . I do not err from haste or a spirit of rattling, as people think I do: when I err, 'tis because I make a false conclusion, not because I make no conclusion at all; when I rattle, I rattle on purpose."

"1789, *May* 1*st*.—Mrs. Montague wants to make up

with me again. I dare say she does; but I will not be taken and left even at the pleasure of those who are much nearer and dearer to me than Mrs. Montague. We want no flash, no flattery. I never had more of either in my life, nor ever lived half so happily: Mrs. Montague wrote creeping letters when she wanted my help, or foolishly *thought* she did, and then turned her back upon me and set her adherents to do the same. I despise such conduct, and Mr. Pepys, Mrs. Ord, &c. now sneak about and look ashamed of themselves — well they may!"

"1790, *March* 18*th*.—I met Miss Burney at an assembly last night — 'tis six years since I had seen her: she appeared most fondly rejoyced, in good time! and Mrs. Locke, at whose house we stumbled on each other, pretended that she had such a regard for me, &c. I answered with ease and coldness, but in exceeding good humour: and we talked of the King and Queen, his Majesty's illness and recovery . . . and all ended as it should do with perfect indifference."

"I saw *Master Pepys* too and Mrs. Ord; and only see how foolish and how mortified the people do but look."

"Barclay and Perkins live very genteely. I dined with them at our brewhouse one day last week. I felt *so* oddly in the old house where I had lived so long."

"The Pepyses find out that they have used me very ill . . . I hope they find out too that I do not care. Seward too sues for reconcilement underhand

. . . so they do all; and I sincerely forgive them —but, like the linnet in 'Metastasio'—

"'Cauto divien per prova
Nè più tradir si fà.'

" 'When lim'd, the poor bird thus with eagerness strains,
Nor regrets his torn wing while his freedom he gains:
The loss of his plumage small time will restore,
And once tried the false twig—it shall cheat him no more.'"

"1790, *July 28th.*—We have kept our seventh wedding day and celebrated our return to *this house** with prodigious splendour and gaiety. Seventy people to dinner. . . . Never was a pleasanter day seen, and at night the trees and front of the house were illuminated with coloured lamps that called forth our neighbours from all the adjacent villages to admire and enjoy the diversion. Many friends swear that not less than a thousand men, women, and children might have been counted in the house and grounds, where, though all were admitted, nothing was stolen, lost, or broken, or even damaged — a circumstance almost incredible; and which gave Mr. Piozzi a high opinion of English gratitude and respectful attachment."

"1790, *December 1st.*—Dr. Parr and I are in correspondence, and his letters are very flattering: I am proud of his notice to be sure, and he seems pleased with my acknowledgments of esteem: he is a prodigious scholar . . . but in the meantime I have lost Dr. Lort."

The following are some of the names most fre-

* Streatham.

quently mentioned in her Diary as visiting or corresponding with her after her return from Italy: "Lord Fife, Dr. Moore, the Kembles, Dr. Currie, Mrs. Lewis (widow of the Dean of Ossory), Dr. Lort, Sir Lucas Pepys, Mr. Selwin, Sammy Lysons (*sic*), Sir Philip Clerke, Hon. Mrs. Byron, Mrs. Siddons, Arthur Murphy, Mr. and Mrs. Whalley, the Greatheads, Mr. Parsons, Miss Seward, Miss Lee, Dr Barnard (Bishop of Killaloe, better known as Dean of Derry), Hinchcliffe (Bishop of Peterborough), Mrs. Lambert, the Staffords, Lord Huntingdon, Lady Betty Cobb and her daughter Mrs. Gould, Lord Dudley, Lord Cowper, Lord Pembroke, Marquis Araciel, Count Marteningo, Count Meltze, Mrs. Drummond Smith, Mr. Chappelow, Mrs. Hobart, Miss Nicholson, Mrs. Locke, Lord Deerhurst.

Resentment for her imputed unkindness to Johnson might have been expected to last longest at his birthplace. But Miss Seward writes from Lichfield, October 6th, 1787:—

"Mrs. Piozzi completely answers your description: her conversation is indeed that bright wine of the intellects which has no lees . . . I shall always feel indebted to him (Mr. Perkins) for eight or nine hours of Mr. and Mrs. Piozzi's society. They passed one evening here, and I the next with them at their inn."

Again to Miss Helen Williams, Lichfield, December, 25th, 1787:—

"Yes, it is very true, on the evening he (Colonel Barry) mentioned to you, when Mrs. Piozzi honoured this roof, his conversation greatly contributed to its

Attic spirit. Till that day I had never conversed with her. There has been no exaggeration, there could be none, in the description given you of Mrs. Piozzi's talents for conversation; at least in the powers of classic allusion and brilliant wit."

That she and her eldest daughter should ever be again on a perfect footing of confidence and affection, was a moral impossibility. Estrangements are commonly durable in proportion to the closeness of the tie that has been severed or loosened; and it is no more than natural that each party, yearning for a reconciliation and not knowing that the wish is reciprocated, should persevere in casting the blame of the prolonged coldness on the other. The occasional sarcasms which Mrs. Piozzi levels at Miss Thrale no more prove disregard or indifference, than Swift's "only a woman's hair" implies contempt for the sex.

Her marriage with Lord Keith in 1808 is thus mentioned in "Thraliana":

"The T. ('Thraliana') is coming to an end; so are the Thrales. The eldest is married now. Admiral Lord Keith the man; a *good* man for ought I hear: a *rich* man for ought I am told: a *brave* man we have always heard: and a *wise* man I trow by his choice. The name no new one, and excellent for a charade, *e. g.*

"A Faery my first, who to fame makes pretence;
My second a Rock, dear Britannia's defence;
In my third when combined will too quickly be shown
The Faery and Rock in our brave Elphin-stone."

Mrs. Piozzi's next publication was "Letters To and

From the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., &c." In the Preface she speaks of the "Anecdotes" having been received with a degree of approbation she hardly dared to hope, and exclaims, "May these Letters in some measure pay my debt of gratitude! they will not surely be the *first*, the *only* thing written by Johnson, with which our nation has not been pleased." A strange mode of conciliating favour for a book; but she proceeds in a different strain:—"The good taste by which our countrymen are distinguished, will lead them to prefer the native thoughts and unstudied phrases scattered over these pages to the more laboured elegance of his other works; as bees have been observed to reject roses, and fix upon the wild fragrance of a neighbouring heath." Whenever Johnson took pen in hand, the chances were, that what he produced would belong to the composite order; the unstudied phrases were reserved for his "talk," and he wished his Letters to be preserved.* The main value of these consists in the additional illustrations they afford of his conduct in private life, and of his opinions on the management of domestic affairs. The lack of literary and public interest is admitted and excused:

"None but domestic and familiar events can be expected from a private correspondence; no reflexions but such as they excite can be found there; yet whoever turns away disgusted by the insipidity with which this, and I suppose every correspondence must naturally and almost necessarily begin—will here be likely to lose

* Vol. i. p. 205.

some genuine pleasure, and some useful knowledge of what our heroic Milton was himself contented to respect, as

"'That which before thee lies in daily life.'

"And should I be charged with obtruding trifles on the public, I might reply, that the meanest animals preserved in amber become of value to those who form collections of natural history; that the fish found in Monte Bolca serve as proofs of sacred writ; and that the cart-wheel stuck in the rock of Tivoli, is now found useful in computing the rotation of the earth."

"Horace Walpole," says Boswell, "thought Johnson a more amiable character after reading his Letters to Mrs. Thrale, but never was one of the true admirers of that great man." Madame D'Arblay came to an opposite conclusion; in her Diary, January 9th, 1788, she writes:—

"To-day Mrs. Schwellenberg did me a real favour, and with real good nature, for she sent me the letters of my poor lost friends, Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, which she knew me to be almost pining to procure. The book belongs to the Bishop of Carlisle, who lent it to Mr. Turbulent, from whom it was again lent to the Queen, and so passed on to Mrs. S. It is still unpublished. With what a sadness have I been reading! what scenes has it revived! what regrets renewed! These letters have not been more improperly published in the whole than they are injudiciously displayed in their several parts. She has given all, every word, and

thinks that perhaps a justice to Dr. Johnson, which, in fact, is the greatest injury to his memory.

"The few she has selected of her own do her, indeed, much credit; she has discarded all that were trivial and merely local; and given only such as contain something instructive, amusing, or ingenious."

She admits only four of Johnson's letters to be worthy of his exalted powers: one upon Death, in considering its approach, as we are surrounded, or not, by mourners; another upon the sudden death of Mrs. Thrale's only son. Her chief motive for "almost pining" for the book, steeped as she was in egotism, may be guessed:—

"Our name once occurred; how I started at its sight! 'Tis to mention the party that planned the first visit to our house."

She says she had so many attacks upon "her (Mrs. Piozzi's) subject," that at last she fairly begged quarter. Yet nothing she could say could put a stop to, "How can you defend her in this? how can you justify her in that? &c. &c." "Alas! that I cannot defend her is precisely the reason I can so ill bear to speak of her. How differently and how sweetly has the Queen conducted herself upon this occasion. Eager to see the Letters, she began reading them with the utmost avidity. A natural curiosity arose to be informed of several names and several particulars, which she knew I could satisfy; yet when she perceived how tender a string she touched, she soon suppressed her inquiries, or only made them with so much gentleness towards the

parties mentioned, that I could not be distressed in my answers; and even in a short time I found her questions made in so favourable a disposition, that I began secretly to rejoice in them, as the means by which I reaped opportunity of clearing several points that had been darkened by calumny, and of softening others that had been viewed wholly through false lights. To lessen disapprobation of a person, and so precious to me in the opinion of another, so respectable both in rank and virtue, was to me a most soothing task &c."

This is precisely what many will take the liberty to doubt; or why did she shrink from it, or why did she not afford to others the explanations which proved so successful with the Queen?

The day following (Jan. 10th), her feelings were so worked upon by the harsh aspersions on her friend, that she was forced, she tells us, abruptly to quit the room; leaving not her own (like Sir Peter Teazle) but her friend's character behind her.

"I returned when I could, and the subject was over. When all were gone, Mrs. Schwellenberg said, 'I have told it Mr. Fisher, that he drove you out from the room, and he says he won't do it no more.'

"She told me next, that in the second volume I also was mentioned. Where she may have heard this I cannot gather, but it has given me a sickness at heart, inexpressible. It is not that I expect severity; for at the time of that correspondence, at all times indeed previous to the marriage with Piozzi, if Mrs. Thrale loved not F. B., where shall we find faith in words, or

give credit to actions. But her present resentment, however unjustly incurred, of my constant disapprobation of her conduct, may prompt some note, or other mark, to point out her change of sentiment. But let me try to avoid such painful expectations; at least not to dwell upon them. O, little does she know how tenderly at this moment I could run into her arms, so often opened to receive me with a cordiality I believed inalienable. And it was sincere then, I am satisfied; pride, resentment of disapprobation, and consciousness of unjustifiable proceedings — these have now changed her; but if we met, and she saw and believed my faithful regard, how would she again feel all her own return! Well, what a dream I am making!"

The ingrained worldliness of the diarist is ill-concealed by the mask of sensibility. The correspondence that passed between the ladies during their temporary rupture (*antè*, p. 107) shows that there was nothing to prevent her from flying into her friend's arms, could she have made up her mind to be seen on open terms of affectionate intimacy with one who was repudiated by the Court. In a subsequent conversation with which the Queen honoured her on the subject, she did her best to impress her Majesty with the belief that Mrs. Piozzi's conduct had rendered it impossible for her former friends to allude to her without regret, and she ended by thanking her royal mistress for her forbearance.

"Indeed," cried she, with eyes strongly expressive of the complacency with which she heard me, "I have always spoken as little as possible upon this affair. I

remember but twice that I have named it: once I said to the Bishop of Carlisle that I thought most of these letters had better have been spared the printing; and once to Mr. Langton, at the drawing-room I said, 'Your friend Dr. Johnson, Sir, has had many friends busy to publish his books, and his memoirs, and his meditations, and his thoughts; but I think he wanted one friend more.' 'What for, Ma'am?' cried he. 'A friend to suppress them,' I answered. And, indeed, this is all I ever said about the business."

Hannah More's opinion of the Letters is thus expressed in her Memoirs:

"They are such as ought to have been written but ought not to have been printed: a few of them are very good: sometimes he is moral, and sometimes he is kind. The imprudence of editors and executors is an additional reason why men of parts should be afraid to die.* Burke said to me the other day, in allusion to the innumerable lives, anecdotes, remains, &c., of this great man, 'How many maggots have crawled out of that great body?'"

Miss Seward writes to Mrs. Knowles, April, 1788:—

"And now what say you to the last publication of your sister wit, Mrs. Piozzi? It is well that she has had the good nature to extract almost all the corrosive particles from the old growler's letters. By means of her benevolent chemistry, these effusions of that ex-

* An Ex Lord Chancellor complained that "Lives of the Lord Chancellors" had added a new pang to death.

pansive but gloomy spirit taste more oily and sweet than one could have imagined possible."

The letters contained two or three passages relating to Baretti, which exasperated him to the highest pitch. One was in a letter from Johnson, dated July 15th, 1775: —

"The doctor says, that if Mr. Thrale comes so near as Derby without seeing us, it will be a sorry trick. I wish, for my part, that he may return soon, and rescue the fair captives from the tyranny of B——i. Poor B——i! do not quarrel with him; to neglect him a little will be sufficient. He means only to be frank, and manly, and independent, and perhaps, as you say, a little wise. To be frank he thinks is to be cynical, and to be independent is to be rude. Forgive him, dearest lady, the rather, because of his misbehaviour, I am afraid he learned part of me. I hope to set him hereafter a better example."

The most galling was in a letter of hers to Dr. Johnson: —

"How does Dr. Taylor do? He was very kind I remember when my thunder-storm came first on, so was Count Manucci, so was Mrs. Montague, so was everybody. The world is not guilty of much general harshness, nor inclined I believe to increase pain which they do not perceive to be deserved.—Baretti alone tried to irritate a wound so very deeply inflicted, and he will find few to approve his cruelty. Your friendship is our best cordial; continue it to us, dear Sir, and write very soon."

In the margin of the printed copy is written, "Cruel, cruel, Baretti." He had twitted her, whilst mourning over a dead child, with having killed it by administering a quack medicine instead of attending to the physician's prescriptions; a charge which he acknowledged and repeated in print. He published three successive papers in "The European Magazine" for 1788, assailing her with the coarsest ribaldry. "I have just read for the first time," writes Miss Seward in June, 1788, "the base, ungentleman-like, unmanly abuse of Mrs. Piozzi by that Italian assassin, Baretti. The whole literary world should unite in publicly reprobating such venomed and foul-mouthed railing." He died soon afterwards, May 5th, 1789, and the notice of him in the "Gentleman's Magazine" begins: "Mrs. Piozzi has reason to rejoice in the death of Mr. Baretti, for he had a very long memory and malice to relate all he knew." And a good deal that he did not know, into the bargain; as when he prints a pretended conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Thrale about Piozzi, which he afterwards admits to be a gratuitous invention and rhetorical figure of his own, for conveying what is a foolish falsehood on the face of it.

Baretti's death is thus noticed in "Thraliana," 8th May, 1789:

"Baretti is dead. Poor Baretti! I am sincerely sorry for him, and as Zanga says, 'If I lament thee, sure thy worth was great.' He was a manly character, at worst, and died, as he lived, less like a Christian than a philosopher, refusing all spiritual or corporeal assistance, both which he considered useless to him,

and perhaps they were so. He paid his debts, called in some single acquaintance, told him he was dying, and drove away that *Panada* conversation which friends think proper to administer at sick-bedsides with becoming steadiness, bid him write his brothers word that he was dead, and gently desired a woman who waited to leave him quite alone. No interested attendants watching for ill-deserved legacies, no harpy relatives clung round the couch of Baretti. He died!

> "'And art thou dead? so is my enmity:
> I war not with the dead.'

"Baretti's papers—manuscripts I mean—have been all burnt by his executors without examination, they tell me. So great was his character as a mischief-maker, that Vincent and Fendall saw no nearer way to safety than that hasty and compendious one. Many people think 'tis a good thing for me, but as I never trusted the man, I see little harm he could have done me."

In the fury of his onslaught Baretti forgot that he was strengthening her case against Johnson, of whom he says: "His austere reprimand, and unrestrained upbraidings, when face to face with her, always delighted Mr. Thrale and were approved even by her children. 'Harry,' said his father to her son, 'are you listening to what the doctor and mamma are talking about?' 'Yes, papa.' And quoth Mr. Thrale, 'What are they saying?' 'They are disputing, and mamma has just such a chance with Dr. Johnson as Presto (a little dog) would have were he to fight Dash (a big one).'" He adds that she left the room in a huff to

the amusement of the party. If scenes like this were frequent, no wonder the "yoke" became unendurable.

Baretti was obliged to admit that, when Johnson died, they were not on speaking terms. His explanation is that Johnson irritated him by an allusion to his being beaten by Omai, the Sandwich islander, at chess. Mrs. Piozzi's marginal note on Omai is: "When Omai played at chess and at backgammon with Baretti, everybody admired at the savage's good breeding and at the European's impatient spirit."

Amongst her papers was the following sketch of his character, written for "The World" newspaper.

"*Mr. Conductor.*—Let not the death of Baretti pass unnoticed by 'The World,' seeing that Baretti was a wit if not a scholar: and had for five-and-thirty years at least lived in a foreign country, whose language he so made himself completely master of, that he could satirise its inhabitants in their own tongue, better than they knew how to defend themselves; and often pleased, without ever praising man or woman in book or conversation. Long supported by the private bounty of friends, he rather delighted to insult than flatter; he at length obtained competence from a public he esteemed not: and died, refusing that assistance he considered as useless — leaving no debts (but those of gratitude) undischarged; and expressing neither regret of the past, nor fear of the future, I believe. Strong in his prejudices, haughty and independent in his spirit, cruel in his anger, — even when unprovoked; vindictive to excess, if he through misconception supposed himself even slightly injured, pertinacious in his attacks, invin-

cible in his aversions: the description of Menelaus in 'Homer's Iliad' as rendered by Pope exactly suits the character of Baretti:

> "'So burns the vengeful Hornet, soul all o'er,
> Repuls'd in vain, and thirsty still for gore;
> Bold son of air and heat on angry wings,
> Untamed, untired, he turns, attacks, and stings.'"

In reference to this article, she remarks in "Thraliana":—

"There seems to be a language now appropriated to the newspapers, and a very wretched and unmeaning language it is. Yet a certain set of expressions are so necessary to please the diurnal readers, that when Johnson and I drew up an advertisement for charity once, I remember the people altered our expressions and substituted their own, with good effect too. The other day I sent a Character of Baretti to the 'World,' and read it two mornings after more altered than improved in my mind: but no matter: they will talk of *wielding* a language, and of *barbarous* infamy,—sad stuff, to be sure, but such is the taste of the times. They altered even my quotation from Pope; but that was too impudent."

The comparison of Baretti to the hornet was truer than she anticipated:—*animamque in vulnere ponit.* Internal evidence leads almost irresistibly to the conclusion that he was the author or prompter of "The Sentimental Mother: a Comedy in Five Acts. The Legacy of an Old Friend, and his 'Last Moral Lesson' to Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale, now Mrs. Hester Lynch

Piozzi. London: Printed for James Ridgeway, York Street, St. James's Square, 1789. Price three shillings." The principal *dramatis personæ* are Mr. Timothy Tunskull (Thrale), Lady Fantasma Tunskull, two Misses Tunskull, and Signor Squalici.

Lady Fantasma is vain, affected, silly, and amorous to excess. Not satisfied with Squalici as her established gallant, she makes compromising advances to her daughter's lover on his way to a *tête-à-tête* with the young lady, who takes her wonted place on his knee with his arm round her waist. Squalici is also a domestic spy, and in league with the mother to cheat the daughters out of their patrimony. Mr. Tunskull is a respectable and complacent nonentity.

The dialogue is seasoned with the same malicious insinuations which mark Baretti's letters in the "European Magazine;" without the saving clause with which shame or fear induced him to qualify the signed abuse, namely, that no breach of chastity was suspected or believed. It is difficult to imagine who else would have thought of reverting to Thrale's establishment eight years after it had been broken up by death.

Mrs. Piozzi had some-how contracted a belief, to which she alludes more than once with unfeigned alarm, that Mr. Samuel Lysons had formed a collection of all the libels and caricatures of which she was the subject on the occasion of her marriage. His collections have been carefully examined, and the sole semblance of warrant for her fears is an album or scrap-book containing numerous extracts from the reviews and news-

papers, relating to her books. The only caricature preserved in it is the celebrated one by Sayers entitled "Johnson's Ghost." The ghost, a flattering likeness of the doctor, addresses a pretty woman seated at a writing table:

"When Streatham spread its pleasant board,
I opened learning's valued hoard,
And as I feasted, prosed.
Good things I said, good things I eat,
I gave you knowledge for your meat,
And thought th' account was closed.

"If obligations still I owed,
You sold each item to the crowd,
I suffered by the tale.
For God's sake, Madam, let me rest,
No longer vex your *quondam* guest,
I'll pay you for your ale."

When addresses were advertised for on the rebuilding of Drury Lane, Sheridan proposed an additional reward for one without a phœnix. Equally acceptable for its rarity would be a squib on Mrs. Piozzi without a reference to the brewery.

Her manuscript notes on the two volumes of Letters are numerous and important, comprising some curious fragments of autobiography, written on separate sheets of paper and pasted into the volumes opposite to the passages which they expand or explain. They would create an inconvenient break in the narrative if introduced here, and they are reserved for a separate section.

In 1789 she published "Observations and Reflections

made in the course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany," in two volumes octavo of about 400 pages each. As happened to almost everything she did or wrote, this book was by turns assailed with inveterate hostility and praised with animated zeal. Walpole writes to Mrs. Carter, June 13th, 1789:

"I do not mean to misemploy much of your time which I know is always passed in good works, and usefully. You have, therefore, probably not looked into Piozzi's Travels. I who have been almost six weeks lying on a couch have gone through them. It was said that Addison might have written his without going out of England. By the excessive vulgarisms so plentiful in these volumes, one might suppose the writer had never stirred out of the parish of St. Giles. Her Latin, French, and Italian, too, are so miserably spelt, that she had better have studied her own language before she floundered into other tongues. Her friends plead that she piques herself on writing as she talks: methinks, then, she should talk as she would write. There are many indiscretions too in her work of which she will perhaps be told though Baretti is dead."

Miss Seward, much to her credit, repeated to Mrs. Piozzi both the praise and the blame she had repeatedly expressed to others. On December 21st, 1789, she writes: —

"Suffer me now to speak to you of your highly ingenious, instructive, and entertaining publication; yet shall it be with the sincerity of friendship, rather than with the flourish of compliment. No work of the sort

I ever read possesses, in an equal degree, the power of placing the reader in the scenes, and amongst the people it describes. Wit, knowledge, and imagination illuminate its pages — but the infinite inequality of the style! — Permit me to acknowledge to you what I have acknowledged to others, that it excites my exhaustless wonder, that Mrs. Piozzi, the child of genius, the pupil of Johnson, should pollute, with the vulgarisms of unpolished conversation, her animated pages! — that, while she frequently displays her power of commanding the most chaste and beautiful style imaginable, she should generally use those inelegant, those strange *dids*, and *does*, and *thoughs*, and *toos*, which produce jerking angles, and stop-short abruptness, fatal at once to the grace and ease of the sentence; — which are, in language, what the rusty black silk handkerchief and the brass ring are upon the beautiful form of the Italian countess she mentions, arrayed in embroidery, and blazing in jewels."

Mrs. Piozzi's theory was that books should be written in the same colloquial and idiomatic language which is employed by cultivated persons in conversation. "Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;" and vulgar she certainly was not, although she sometimes indulged her fondness for familiarity too far. The period was unluckily chosen for carrying such a theory into practice; for Johnson's authority had discountenanced idiomatic writing, whilst many phrases and forms of speech, which would not be endured now, were tolerated in polite society.

The laws of spelling, too, were unfixed or vague, and those of pronunciation, which more or less affected spelling, still more so. "When," said Johnson, "I published the plan of my dictionary, Lord Chesterfield told me that the word *great* should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *state;* and Sir William Yonge sent me word that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *seat,* and that none but an Irishman would pronounce it *grait.* Now here were two men of the highest rank, one the best speaker in the House of Lords, the other the best speaker in the House of Commons, differing entirely." Mrs. Piozzi has written on the margin:—"Sir William was in the right." Two well-known couplets of Pope's imply similar changes:—

"Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged."

* * * *

"Imperial Anna, whom these realms obey,
Here sometimes counsel takes, and sometimes tea."

Within living memory, elderly people of quality, both in writing and conversation, stuck to Lunnun, Brummagem, and Cheyny (China). Lord Byron wrote *redde* (for *read,* in the past tense), and Lord Dudley declined being helped to apple *tart.* When, therefore, we find Mrs. Piozzi using words or idioms rejected by modern taste or fastidiousness, we must not be too ready to accuse her of ignorance or vulgarity. I have commonly retained her original syntax and her spelling, which frequently varies within a page.

Two days afterwards, Walpole returns to the charge

in a letter to Miss Berry, which were alone sufficient to prove the worthlessness of his literary judgments: —

"Read 'Sindbad the Sailor's Voyages,' and you will be sick of Æneas's. What woful invention were the nasty poultry that dunged on his dinner, and ships on fire turned into Nereids! A barn metamorphosed into a cascade in a pantomime is full as sublime an effort of genius. . . . I do not think the Sultaness's narratives very natural or very probable, but there is a wildness in them that captivates. However, if you could wade through two octavos of Dame Piozzi's *though's* and *so's* and *I trows*, and cannot listen to seven volumes of Scheherezade's narratives, I will sue for a divorce in foro Parnassi, and Boccalini shall be my proctor."

A single couplet of Gifford's was more damaging than all Walpole's petulance:

> "See Thrale's grey widow with a satchel roam,
> And bring in pomp laborious nothings home."*

* "She, one evening, asked me abruptly if I did not remember the scurrilous lines in which she had been depicted by Gifford in his 'Baviad and Mœviad.' And, not waiting for my answer, for I was indeed too much embarrassed to give one quickly, she recited the verses in question, and added, 'how do you think "Thrale's grey widow" revenged herself? I contrived to get myself invited to meet him at supper at a friend's house, (I think she said in Pall Mall), soon after the publication of his poem, sate opposite to him, saw that he was "perplexed in the extreme;" and smiling, proposed a glass of wine as a libation to our future good fellowship. Gifford was sufficiently a man of the world to understand me, and nothing could be more courteous and entertaining than he was while we remained together.'"—*Piozziana.*

This condemnatory verse is every way unjust. The nothings, or somethings, which form the staple of the book, are not laboured; and they are presented without the semblance of pomp or pretension. The Preface commences thus:

"I was made to observe at Rome some vestiges of an ancient custom very proper in those days. It was the parading of the street by a set of people called Preciæ, who went some minutes before the Flamen Dialis, to bid the inhabitants leave work or play, and attend wholly to the procession; but if ill-omens prevented the pageants from passing, or if the occasion of the show was deemed scarce worthy its celebration, these Preciæ stood a chance of being ill-treated by the spectators. A prefatory introduction to a work like this can hope little better usage from the public than they had. It proclaims the approach of what has often passed by before; adorned most certainly with greater splendour, perhaps conducted with greater regularity and skill. Yet will I not despair of giving at least a momentary amusement to my countrymen in general; while their entertainment shall serve as a vehicle for conveying expressions of particular kindness to those foreign individuals, whose tenderness softened the sorrows of absence, and who eagerly endeavoured by unmerited attentions to supply the loss of their company, on whom nature and habit had given me stronger claims."

The Preface concludes with the happy remark that—"the labours of the press resemble those of the toilette; both should be attended to and finished with care; but

once completed, should take up no more of our attention, unless we are disposed at evening to destroy all effect of our morning's study."

It would be difficult to name a book of travels in which anecdotes, observations, and reflections are more agreeably mingled, or one from which a clearer bird's-eye view of the external state of countries visited in rapid succession may be caught. Her sketch of the north of France on her way to Paris, may be taken as an example: —

"CHANTILLY.—Our way to this place lay through Boulogne; thesituation of which is pleasing, and the fish there excellent. I was glad to see Boulogne, though I can scarcely tell why; but one is always glad to see something new, and talk of something old: for example, the story I once heard of Miss Ashe, speaking of poor Dr. James, who loved profligate conversation dearly,—'That man should set up his quarters across the water,' said she; 'why Boulogne would be a seraglio to him.'

"The country, as far as Montreuil, is a coarse one; thin herbage in the plains and fruitless fields. The cattle too are miserably poor and lean; but where there is no grass, we can scarcely expect them to be fat: they must not feed on wheat, I suppose, and cannot digest tobacco. Herds of swine, not flocks of sheep, meet one's eye upon the hills; and the very few gentlemen's seats that we have passed by, seem out of repair, and deserted. The French do not reside much in private houses, as the English do: but while those of narrower fortunes flock to the country towns within their reach,

those of ampler purses repair to Paris, where the rent of their estate supplies them with pleasures at no very enormous expense. The road is magnificent, like our old-fashioned avenue in a nobleman's park, but wider, and paved in the middle: this convenience continued on for many hundred miles, and all at the king's expense. Every man you meet politely pulls off his hat *en passant;* and the gentlemen have commonly a good horse under them, but certainly a dressed one.

"The sporting season is not come in yet, but I believe the idea of sporting seldom enters any head except an English one: here is prodigious plenty of game, but the familiarity with which they walk about and sit by our road-side, shows they feel no apprehensions.

"The pert vivacity of *La Fille* at Montreuil was all we could find there worth remarking: it filled up my notions of French flippancy agreeably enough; as no English wench would so have answered one to be sure. She had complained of our avant-coureur's behaviour, '*Il parle sur le haut ton, mademoiselle*' (said I), '*mais il a le cœur bon:*' '*Ouydà*' (replied she, smartly). '*mais c'est le ton qui fait le chanson.*' "

She ends her notice of Chantilly thus: —

"The theatre belonging to the house is a lovely one; and the truly princely possessor, when he heard once that an English gentleman, travelling for amusement, had called at Chantilly too late to enjoy the diversion, instantly, though past twelve o'clock at night, ordered a new representation, that his curiosity might be gratified. This is the same Prince of Condé, who going

from Paris to his country seat here for a month or two, when his eldest son was nine years old, left him fifty louis d'ors as an allowance during his absence. At his return to town, the boy produced his purse, crying, '*Papa! here's all the money safe; I have never touched it once.*' The Prince, in reply, took him gravely to the window, and opening it, very quietly poured all the louis d'ors into the street; saying, 'Now, if you have neither virtue enough to give away your money, nor spirit enough to spend it, always *do this* for the future, do you hear; that the poor may at least have a *chance for it.*'"

Although the extraordinary change effected by the French Revolution of 1789 is an everlasting topic, it is only on reading a book like Mercier's "Tableau de Paris," or travels like these, that the full extent of that change is vividly brought home to us: —

"In the evening we looked at the new square called the Palais Royal, whence the Duc de Chartres has removed a vast number of noble trees, which it was a sin and shame to profane with an axe, after they had adorned that spot for so many centuries. — The people were accordingly as angry, I believe, as Frenchmen well can be, when the folly was first committed: the court, however, had wit enough to convert the place into a sort of Vauxhall, with tents, fountains, shops, full of frippery, brilliant at once and worthless, to attract them; with coffee-houses surrounding it in every side; and now they are all again *merry* and *happy*, synonymous terms at Paris, though often disunited in London; and *Vive le Duc de Chartres!*

"The French are really a contented race of mortals;—precluded almost from possibility of adventure, the low Parisian leads a gentle, humble life, nor envies that greatness he never can obtain; but either wonders delightedly, or diverts himself philosophically with the sight of splendours which seldom fail to excite serious envy in an Englishman, and sometimes occasion even suicide, from disappointed hopes, which never could take root in the heart of these unaspiring people. Reflections of this cast are suggested to one here in every shop, where the behaviour of the master at first sight contradicts all that our satirists tell us of the *supple Gaul*, &c. A mercer in this town shows you a few silks, and those he scarcely opens; *vous devez choisir*, is all he thinks of saying to invite your custom; then takes out his snuff-box, and yawns in your face, fatigued by your inquiries . . . A Frenchman who should make his fortune by trade to-morrow, would be no nearer advancement in society or situation: why then should he solicit, by arts he is too lazy to delight in, the practice of that opulence which would afford so slight an improvement to his comforts? He lives as well as he wishes already; he goes to the Boulevards every night, treats his wife with a glass of lemonade or ice, and holds up his babies by turns, to hear the jokes of *Jean Pottage*.

"Emulation, ambition, avarice, however, must in all arbitrary governments be confined to the great; the *other* set of mortals, for there are none there of *middling* rank, live, as it should seem, like eunuchs in a seraglio;

feel themselves irrevocably doomed to promote the pleasure of their superiors, nor ever dream of sighing for enjoyments from which an irremeable boundary divides them. They see at the beginning of their lives how that life must necessarily end, and trot with a quiet, contented, and unaltered pace down their long, straight, and shaded avenue; while we, with anxious solicitude and restless hurry, watch the quick turnings of our serpentine walk, which still presents, either to sight or expectation, some changes of variety in the ever-shifting prospect, till the unthought-of, unexpected end comes suddenly upon us, and finishes at once the fluctuating scene."

"The contradictions one meets with every moment likewise strike even a cursory observer,—a countess in a morning, her hair dressed, with diamonds too perhaps, a dirty black handkerchief about her neck, and a flat silver ring on her finger, like our ale-wives; a *femme publique*, dressed avowedly for the purposes of alluring the men, with a not very small crucifix hanging at her bosom; — and the Virgin Mary's sign at an ale-house door, with these words,

> "'Je suis la mere de mon Dieu,
> Et la gardienne de ce lieu.'"

A zealous editor of Pope would readily brave the journey to Paris to pick up such an anecdote as the following:

"I have stolen a day to visit my old acquaintance the English Austin Nuns at the Foffée, and found the

whole community alive and cheerful; they are many of them agreeable women, and having seen Dr. Johnson with me when I was last abroad, inquired much for him: Mrs. Fermor, the Prioress, niece to Belinda in the Rape of the Lock, taking occasion to tell me, comically enough, 'that she believed there was but little comfort to be found in a house that harboured *poets;* for that she remembered Mr. Pope's praise made her aunt very troublesome and conceited, while his numberless caprices would have employed ten servants to wait on him; and he gave one,' (said she) 'no amends by his talk neither, for he only sate dozing all day, when the sweet wine was out, and made his verses chiefly in the night; during which season he kept himself awake by drinking coffee, which it was one of the maids' business to make for him, and they took it by turns.'"

At Milan she institutes a delicate inquiry:—

"The women are not behind-hand in openness of confidence and comical sincerity. We have all heard much of Italian cicisbeism; I had a mind to know how matters really stood; and took the nearest way to information by asking a mighty beautiful and apparently artless young creature, *not noble,* how that affair was managed, for there is no harm done *I am sure,* said I: 'Why no,' replied she, 'no great *harm* to be sure: except wearisome attentions from a man one cares little about; for my own part,' continued she, 'I detest the custom, as I happen to love my husband excessively, and desire nobody's company in the world but his. We

are not *people of fashion* though you know, nor at all rich; so how should we set fashions for our betters? They would only say, see how jealous he is! if *Mr. Such-a-one* sat much with me at home, or went with me to the Corso; and I *must* go with some gentleman you know: and the men are such ungenerous creatures, and have such ways with them: I want money often, and this *cavaliere servente* pays the bills, and so the connection draws closer — *that's all.*' And your husband! said I—'Oh, why he likes to see me well dressed; he is very good-natured, and very charming; I love him to my heart.' And your confessor! cried I.—'Oh! why he is *used to it*'—in the Milanese dialect—*è assuefaà.*"

At Venice, the tone was somewhat different from what would be employed now by the finest lady on the Grand Canal:

"This firmly-fixed idea of subordination (which I once heard a Venetian say, he believed must exist in heaven from one angel to another), accounts immediately for a little conversation which I am now going to relate.

"Here were two men taken up last week, one for murdering his fellow-servant in cold blood, while the undefended creature had the lemonade tray in his hand going in to serve company; the other for breaking the new lamps lately set up with intention to light this town in the manner of the streets at Paris. 'I hope,' said I, 'that they will hang the murderer.' 'I rather hope,' replied a very sensible lady who sate near me,

'that they will hang the person who broke the lamps: for,' added she, 'the first committed his crime only out of revenge, poor fellow!! because the other had got his mistress from him by treachery; but this creature has had the impudence to break our fine new lamps, all for the sake of spiting *the Arch-duke!!*' The Arch-duke meantime hangs nobody at all; but sets his prisoners to work upon the roads, public buildings, &c., where they labour in their chains; and where, strange to tell! they often insult passengers who refuse them alms when asked as they go by; and, stranger still, they are not punished for it when they do." . . .

"I would rather, before leaving the plains of Lombardy, give my country-women one reason for detaining them so long there: it cannot be an uninteresting reason to us, when we reflect that our first head-dresses were made by *Milaners*; that a court gown was early known in England by the name of a *mantua*, from *Manto*, the daughter of Terefias, who founded the city so called; and that some of the best materials for making these mantuas is still named from the town it is manufactured in—a *Padua* soy."

Here is a Frenchman's reason for preferring France to England and Italy:—

"A Frenchman whom I sent for once at Bath to dress my hair, gave me an excellent trait of his own national character, speaking upon that subject, when he meant to satirise ours. "You have lived some years in England, friend,' said I; 'do you like it?'—'Mais non, madame, pas parfaitement bien.'—'You have travelled

much in Italy; do you like that better?' — 'Ah, Dieu ne plaise, Madame, je n'aime guères messieurs les Italiens.' 'What do they do to make you hate them so?'—'Mais c'est que les Italiens se tuent l'un l'autre' (replied the fellow), 'et les Anglois se font un plaisir de se tuer eux mesmes: pardi je ne me sens rien moins qu'un vrai gout pour ces gentillesses là, et j'aimerois mieux me trouver à *Paris, pour rire un peu.*'"

The lover sacrificing his reputation; his liberty, or his life, to save the fair fame of his mistress, is not an unusual event in fiction, whatever it may be in real life. Balzac, Charles de Bernard, and M. de Jarnac have each made a self-sacrifice of this kind the basis of a romance. But neither of them has hit upon a better plot than might be formed out of the Venetian story related by Mrs. Piozzi: —

"Some years ago then, perhaps a hundred, one of the many spies who ply this town by night, ran to the state inquisitor, with information that such a nobleman (naming him) had connections with the French ambassador, and went privately to his house every night at a certain hour. The *messergrando*, as they call him, could not believe, nor would proceed, without better and stronger proof, against a man for whom he had an intimate personal friendship, and on whose virtue he counted with very particular reliance. Another spy was therefore set, and brought back the same intelligence, adding the description of his disguise: on which the worthy magistrate put on his mask and bauta, and went out himself; when his eyes confirming the report

of his informants, and the reflection on his duty stifling all remorse, he sent publicly for *Foscarini* in the morning, whom the populace attended all weeping to his door.

"Nothing but resolute denial of the crime alleged could however be forced from the firm-minded citizen, who, sensible of the discovery, prepared for that punishment he knew to be inevitable, and submitted to the fate his friend was obliged to inflict: no less than a dungeon for life, that dungeon so horrible that I have heard Mr. Howard was not permitted to see it.

"The people lamented, but their lamentations were vain. The magistrate who condemned him never recovered the shock: but Foscarini was heard of no more, till an old lady died forty years after in Paris, whose last confession declared she was visited with amorous intentions by a nobleman of Venice whose name she never knew, while she resided there as companion to the ambassadress. So was Foscarini lost! so died he a martyr to love, and tenderness for female reputation!"

The Mendicanti was a Venetian institution which deserves to be commemorated for its singularity: —

"Apropos to singing;—we were this evening carried to a well-known conservatory called the Mendicanti, who performed an oratorio in the church with great, and I dare say deserved applause. It was difficult for me to persuade myself that all the performers were women, till, watching carefully, our eyes convinced us, as they were but slightly grated. The sight of girls,

however, handling the double bass, and blowing into the bassoon, did not much please *me;* and the deep-toned voice of her who sung the part of Saul, seemed an odd unnatural thing enough. What I found most curious and pretty, was to hear Latin verses, of the old Leonine race broken into eight and six, and sung in rhyme by these women, as if they were airs of Metastasio; all in their dulcified pronunciation too, for the *patois* runs equally through every language when spoken by a Venetian.

"Well! these pretty sirens were delighted to seize upon us, and pressed our visit to their parlour with a sweetness that I know not who would have resisted. We had no such intent; and amply did their performance repay my curiosity for visiting Venetian beauties, so justly celebrated for their seducing manners and soft address. They accompanied their voices with the forte-piano, and sung a thousand buffo songs, with all that gay voluptuousness for which their country is renowned.

"The school, however, is running to ruin apace; and perhaps the conduct of the married women here may contribute to make such *conservatorios* useless and neglected. When the Duchess of Montespan asked the famous Louison D'Arquien, by way of insult, as she pressed too near her, '*Comment alloit le metier?*' '*Depuis que les dames s'en mèlent,*' (replied the courtesan with no improper spirit,) '*il ne vaut plus rien.*'"

Describing Florence, she says:—

"Sir Horace Mann is sick and old; but there are

conversations at his house of a Saturday evening, and sometimes a dinner, to which we have been almost always asked."

So much for Walpole's assertion that "she had broken with his Horace, because he could not invite her husband with the Italian nobility." She held her own, if she did not take the lead, in whatever society she happened to be thrown, and no one could have objected to Piozzi without breaking with her. In point of fact, no one did object to him.

One of her notes on Naples is:—

"Well, well! if the Neapolitans do bury Christians like dogs, they make some singular compensations we will confess, by nursing dogs like Christians. A very veracious man informed me yester morning, that his poor wife was half broken-hearted at hearing such a Countess's dog was run over; 'for,' said he, 'having suckled the pretty creature herself, she loved it like one of her children.' I bid him repeat the circumstance, that no mistake might be made: he did so; but seeing me look shocked, or ashamed, or something he did not like,—'Why, Madam,' said the fellow, 'it is a common thing enough for ordinary men's wives to suckle the lap-dogs of ladies of quality:' adding, that they were paid for their milk, and he saw no harm in gratifying one's *superiors*. As I was disposed to see nothing *but* harm in disputing with such a competitor our conference finished soon; but the fact is certain.

"Indeed few things can be foolisher than to debate the propriety of customs one is not bound to observe or

comply with. If you dislike them, the remedy is easy; turn yours and your horses' heads the other way."

On the margin she has written:—

"Mrs. Greathead could scarcely be made to credit so hideous a fact, till I showed her the portrait (at a broker's shop) of a woman *suckling a cat*."

At Vienna, she remarks:—

"So different are the customs here and at Venice, that the German ladies offer you chocolate on the same salver with coffee, of an evening, and fill up both with milk; saying that you may have the latter quite black if you choose it—'Tout noir, Monsieur, à la Vénitienne;"—adding their best advice not to risque a practice so unwholesome. While their care upon that account reminds me chiefly of a friend, who lives upon the Grand Canal, that in reply to a long panegyric upon English delicacy, said she would tell a story that would prove them to be nasty enough, at least in some things; for that she had actually seen a handsome young nobleman, who came from London (*and ought to have known better*), souse some thick cream into the fine clear coffee she presented him with; which every body must confess to be *vera porcheria!* a very *piggish trick!*—So necessary and so pleasing is conformity, and so absurd and perverse is it ever to forbear such assimilation of manners, when not inconsistent with the virtue, honour, or necessary interest:—let us eat sour-crout in Germany, frittura at Milan, macaroni at Naples, and beef-steaks in England, if one wishes to please the inhabitants of either country; and all are very good, so it is a slight

compliance. Poor Dr. Goldsmith said once — 'I would advise every young fellow setting out in life *to love gravy;*' — and added, that he had formerly seen a glutton's eldest nephew disinherited, because his uncle never could persuade him to say he liked gravy."

Mr. Forster thinks that the concluding anecdote conveys a false impression of one

"Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

"Mrs. Piozzi, in her travels, quite solemnly sets forth that poor Dr. Goldsmith said once, 'I would advise every young fellow setting forth in life to love gravy,' alleging for it the serious reason that 'he had formerly seen a glutton's eldest nephew disinherited because his uncle never could persuade him to say he liked gravy.' Imagine the dullness that would convert a jocose saying of this kind into an unconscious utterance of grave absurdity."* In his index may be read:—"Mrs. Piozzi's absurd instance of Goldsmith's absurdity." Mrs. Piozzi does not quote the saying as an instance of absurdity; nor set it forth solemnly. She repeats it, as an apt illustration of her argument, in the same semi-serious spirit in which it may be supposed to have been originally hazarded. Sydney Smith took a different view of this grave gravy question. On a young lady's declining gravy, he exclaimed:—"I have been looking all my life for a person who disliked gravy: let us vow eternal friendship."

* Life of Goldsmith, vol. ii. p. 205. Mr. Forster allows her the credit of discovering the lurking irony in Goldsmith's verses on Cumberland, vol. ii. p. 293.

The "British Synonymy" appeared in 1794. It was thus assailed by Gifford:—

"Though 'no one better knows his own house' than I the vanity of this woman; yet the idea of her undertaking such a work had never entered my head; and I was thunderstruck when I first saw it announced. To execute it with any tolerable degree of success, required a rare combination of talents, among the least of which may be numbered neatness of style, acuteness of perception, and a more than common accuracy of discrimination; and Mrs. Piozzi brought to the task, a jargon long since become proverbial for its vulgarity, an utter incapability of defining a single term in the language, and just as much Latin from a child's Syntax, as sufficed to expose the ignorance she so anxiously labours to conceal. 'If such a one be fit to write on Synonimes, speak.' Pignotti himself laughs in his sleeve; and his countrymen, long since undeceived, prize the lady's talents at their true worth,

"'Et centum Tales* curto centusse licentur.'"

* Query Thrales?—*Printer's Devil.*

Other critics have been more lenient or more just. Enough philosophical knowledge and acuteness were discovered in the work to originate a rumour that she had retained some of the great lexicographer's manuscripts, or derived a posthumous advantage from her former intimacy with him in some shape. In "Thraliana," Denbigh, 2nd January, 1795, she writes:

"My 'Synonimes.' have been reviewed at last. The

critics are all civil for ought I see, and nearly just, except when they say that Johnson left some fragments of a work upon Synonymy: of which God knows I never heard till now one syllable; never had he and I, in all the time we lived together, any conversation upon the subject."

Even Walpole admits that it has some marked and peculiar merits, although its value consists rather in the illustrative matter, than in the definition and etymologies, *e. g.*

"With regard to the words upon my list (lavish, profuse, prodigal), the same Dr. Johnson with his accustomed wisdom observed, That a young man naturally disposed to be LAVISH ever appears beset with temptations to extend his folly, and become eminently PROFUSE, till he can scarcely avoid ending his days a PRODIGAL, distressed on every side in mind, body, and estate; for while the neighbours and acquaintance repress that spirit of penurious niggardliness which now and then betrays itself in a boy of mean education,—because from *that* baseness indulged no pleasure or profit can accrue to standers by—they all encourage an empty-headed lad in idle and expensive wastefulness, from whence something may possibly drop into every gaping mouth. I never myself heard a story of prodigality reduced to want, yet keeping up its character in the very hour of despair, so well authenticated as the following, which I gained from a native of Italy.

"Two gentlemen of that country were walking leisurely up the Hay-Market some time in the year 1749, lamenting the fate of the famous Cuzzona, an actress who

some time before had been in high vogue, but was then as they heard in a very pitiable situation. 'Let us go and visit her,' said one of them, 'she lives but over the way.' The other consented; and calling at the door, they were shown up stairs, but found the faded beauty dull and spiritless, unable or unwilling to converse on any subject. 'How's this?' cried one of her consolers, 'are you ill? or is it but low spirits chains your tongue so?'—'Neither,' replied she: ''tis hunger I suppose. I ate nothing yesterday, and now 'tis past six o'clock, and not one penny have I in the world to buy me any food.'—'Come with us instantly to a tavern; we will treat you with the best roast fowls and Port wine that London can produce.'—'But I will have neither my dinner nor my place of eating it prescribed to *me*,' answered Cuzzona, in a sharper tone, 'else I need never have wanted.' 'Forgive me,' cries the friend; 'do your own way; but eat in the name of God, and restore fainting nature.'—She thanked him then; and, calling to her a friendly wretch who inhabited the same theatre of misery, gave *him* the guinea the visitor accompanied his last words with; 'and run with this money,' said she, 'to such a wine-merchant,' (naming him); 'he is the only one keeps good Tokay by him. 'Tis a guinea a bottle, mind you,' to the boy; 'and bid the gentleman you buy it of give you a loaf into the bargain,—he won't refuse.' In half an hour or less the lad returned with the Tokay. 'But where,' cries Cuzzona, 'is the loaf I spoke for?' 'The merchant would give me no loaf,' replies her messenger; 'he drove me from the door, and

asked if I took him for a baker.' 'Blockhead!' exclaims she; 'why I must have bread to my wine, you know, and I have not a penny to purchase any. Go beg me a loaf directly.' The fellow returns once more with one in his hand and a halfpenny, telling 'em the gentleman threw him three, and laughed at his impudence. She gave her Mercury the money, broke the bread into a wash-hand basin which stood near, poured the Tokay over it, and devoured the whole with eagerness. This was indeed a heroine in PROFUSION. Some active well-wishers procured her a benefit after this; she gained about 350*l.*, 'tis said, and laid out two hundred of the money instantly in a *shell-cap*. They wore such things then."

When Savage got a guinea, he commonly spent it in a tavern at a sitting; and referring to the memorable morning when the "Vicar of Wakefield" was produced, Johnson says: "I sent him (Goldsmith) a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him." Mrs. Piozzi continues:—

"But Doctor Johnson had always some story at hand to check extravagant and wanton wastefulness. His improviso verses made on a young heir's coming of age are highly capable of restraining such folly, if it is to be restrained: they never yet were printed, I believe.

"'Long expected one-and-twenty,
Lingering year, at length is flown;
Pride and pleasure, pomp and plenty,
Great —— ——, are now your own.

"'Loosen'd from the minor's tether,
Free to mortgage or to sell,
Wild as wind, and light as feather,
Bid the sons of thrift farewell.

"'Call the Betseys, Kates, and Jennies,
All the names that banish care;
LAVISH of your grandsire's guineas,
Show the spirit of an heir.

"'All that prey on vice or folly
Joy to see their quarry fly;
There the gamester light and jolly,
There the lender grave and sly.

"'Wealth, my lad, was made to wander,
Let it wander as it will;
Call the jockey, call the pander,
Bid them come and take their fill.

"'When the bonny blade carouses,
Pockets full, and spirits high —
What are acres? what are houses?
Only dirt or wet or dry.

"'Should the guardian friend or mother
Tell the woes of wilful waste;
Scorn their counsel, scorn their pother —
You can hang or drown at last.'"

These verses were addressed to Thrale's nephew, Sir John Lade, in August, 1780. They bear a strong resemblance to some of Burns' in his "Beggar's Sonata," written in 1785: —

> "What is title, what is treasure,
> What is reputation's care;
> If we lead a life of pleasure,
> Can it matter how or where?"

In 1801, Mrs. Piozzi published "Retrospection; or a Review of the Most Striking and Important Events, Characters, Situations, and their Consequences, which the Last Eighteen Hundred Years have presented to the View of Mankind." It is in two volumes quarto, containing rather more than 1000 pages. A fitting motto for it would have been, *De omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.* The subject, or range of subjects, was beyond her grasp; and the best that can be said of the book is that a good general impression of the stream of history, lighted up with striking traits of manners and character, may be obtained from it. It would have required the united powers and acquirements of Raleigh, Burke, Gibbon, and Voltaire to fill so vast a canvass with appropriate groups and figures; and she is more open to blame for the ambitious conception of the work than for her comparative failure in the execution. Some slight misgiving is betrayed in the Preface:

"If I should have made improper choice of facts, and if I should be found at length most to resemble Maister Fabyan of old, who writing the Life of Henry V. lays heaviest stress on a new weathercock set up on St.

Paul's steeple during that eventful reign, my book must share the fate of his, and be like that forgotten: reminding before its death perhaps a friend or two of a poor man (Macbean) living in later times, that Doctor Johnson used to tell us of; who being advised to take subscriptions for a new Geographical Dictionary, hastened to Bolt Court and begged advice. There having listened carefully for half-an-hour, 'Ah, but dear Sir,' exclaimed the admiring parasite, 'if I am to make all this eloquent ado about Athens and Rome, where shall we find place, do you think, for Richmond, or Aix La Chapelle?'"

The following letter, copied from an autograph book, relates principally to this book: —

"No. 5, Henrietta Street, Bath.
15th Dec. 1802.

"A thousand thanks, dear Sir, for the very agreeable letter which followed me here yesterday, and how good-natured it was in you to copy over what you justly conceived would give me so much pleasure.

"Our spirited young friend, my partial panegyrist, seems likely to succeed in any walk of literature where elegance of style and power of language are required. Sorry am I to say, that readers of the present day find such charms nearly superfluous. They turn over leaf after leaf, in search of mere story, and if that possesses some new entanglement of intrigue, or untasted spring of sorrow, few care how the narrative is told: hence the deluge of words, oddly coined, and forced into our literary currency, to the no small degradation of lan-

guage — a misfortune the reviewers contribute not to cure.

"The 'Gentleman's Magazine' for June 1801 contained my answer to such critics as confined themselves to faults I could have helped committing — had they been faults. Those who merely told disagreeable truths concerning my person, or dress, or age, or such stuff, expected, of course, no reply. There are innumerable press errors in the book, from my being obliged to print on new year's day — during an insurrection of the printers. These the 'Critical Review' laid hold of with an acuteness sharpened by malignity. But if the lady who has done me so much honour by *wishing*, however imprudently, to enter on my defence, will confide her copy of 'Retrospection' to my care, I will correct it very neatly for her with my own hand, and add some notes which may contribute to her amusement.

"Mr. Piozzi says he will go back to Wales through your town, and give me an opportunity of conversing with you and with her — a pleasure exceedingly desired by dear Doctor Thackeray's

Ever obliged and faithful

H. L. Piozzi.

"Receive my husband's best regards, and present mine to my kind and charming friend."

Moore, who was staying at Bowood, sets down in his diary for April, 1823: "Lord L. in the evening, quoted a ridiculous passage from the Preface to

Mrs. Piozzi's "Retrospections,' in which, anticipating the ultimate perfection of the human race, she says she does not despair of the time arriving when 'Vice will take refuge in the arms of impossibility.' Mentioned also an ode of hers to Posterity, beginning, 'Posterity, gregarious dame,' the only meaning of which must be, a lady *chez qui* numbers assemble — a lady *at home.*"*

Moore must have mistaken the reference; for there is no such passage in the Preface to "Retrospection." As to the ode, which I have been unable to discover, surely the term "gregarious," used in an ironical sense, is not ill-adapted to Posterity.

"I repeated," adds Moore, "what Jekyll told the other day of Bearcroft saying to Mrs. Piozzi, when Thrale, after she had repeatedly call him Mr. Beercraft: 'Beercraft is not my name, Madam; it may be your trade but it is not my name.' It may always be questioned whether this offensive description of repartee was really uttered at the time. But Bearcroft was capable of it. He began his cross-examination of Mr. Vansittart by—'With your leave, Sir, I will call you Mr. Van for shortness.' 'As you please, Sir, and I will call you Mr. Bear.'"

Towards the end of 1795, Mrs. Piozzi left Streatham for her seat in North Wales, where (1800 or 1801) she was visited by a young nobleman, now an eminent statesman, distinguished by his love of literature and the fine arts, who has been good enough to recall and write down his impressions of her for me:

* Memoirs, &c., vol. iv. p. 38.

"I did certainly know Madame Piozzi, but had no habits of acquaintance with her, and she never lived in London to my knowledge. When in my youth I made a tour in Wales—times when all inns were bad, and all houses hospitable—I put up for a day at her house, I think in Denbighshire, the proper name of which was Bryn, and to which, on the occasion of her marriage I was told, she had recently added the name of Bella. I remember her taking me into her bed-room to show me the floor covered with folios, quartos, and octavos, for consultation, and indicating the labour she had gone through in compiling an immense volume she was then publishing, called "Retrospection." She was certainly what was called, and is still called, blue, and that of a deep tint, but good humoured and lively, though affected; her husband, a quiet civil man, with his head full of nothing but music.

"I afterwards called on her at Bath, where she chiefly resided. I remember it was at the time Madame de Stael's 'Delphine,' and 'Corinne,' came out*, and that we agreed in preferring 'Delphine,' which nobody reads now, to 'Corinne,' which most people read then, and a few do still. She rather avoided talking of Johnson. These are trifles, not worth recording, but I have put them down that you might not think me neglectful of your wishes; but now *j'ai vuidé mon sac.*"

Her mode of passing her time when she had ceased writing books, with the topics which interested her,

* "Delphine" appeared in 1804; "Corinne," in 1806.

will be best learnt from her letters. Her vivacity never left her, and the elasticity of her spirits bore up against every description of depression. Writing of a visit to Wynnstay in January 1803, she says, 'That she arrived like an owl in the dark, and found the house a perfect warren of boys and girls, with their pa's and ma's, twelve Cunliffs, five boys and five girls, who with parent birds are most charming. Here I staid ten days, and ten more would have killed me."

It would seem that she had adopted Dr. Johnson's theory of dress for little women by this time, for a lady who met her on the way describes her as "skipping about like a kid, quite a figure of fun, in a tiger skin shawl, lined with scarlet, and *only* five colours upon her head-dress—on the top of a flaxen wig a bandeau of blue velvet, a bit of tiger ribbon, a white beaver hat and plume of black feathers — as gay as a lark."

In a letter (dated Jan. 1799) to a Welsh neighbour, Mrs. Piozzi says:—

"Mr. Piozzi has lost considerably in purse, by the cruel inroads of the French in Italy, and of all his family driven from their quiet homes, has at length with difficulty saved one little boy, who is now just turned of five years old. We have got him here (Bath) since I wrote last, and his uncle will take him to school next week; for as our John has nothing but his talents and education to depend upon, he must be a scholar, and we will try hard to make him a very good one.

"My poor little boy from Lombardy said as I walked him across our market, 'These are sheeps' heads,

are they not, aunt? I saw a basket of men's heads at Brescia.'

"As he was by a lucky chance baptized, in compliment to me, John Salusbury, five years ago, when happier days smiled on his family, he will be known in England by no other, and it will be forgotten he is a foreigner. A lucky circumstance for one who is intended to work his way among our islanders by talent, diligence, and education."

She thus mentions this event in "Thraliana," January 17th, 1798:

"Italy is ruined and England threatened. I have sent for one little boy from among my husband's nephews. He was christened John Salusbury: he shall be naturalised, and then we will see whether he will be more grateful and natural and comfortable than Miss Thrales have been to the mother they have at length driven to desperation."

She could hardly have denied her husband the satisfaction of rescuing a single member of his family from the wreck; and they were bound to provide handsomely for the child of their adoption. Whether she carried the sentiment too far, in giving him the entire estate (not a large one) is a very different question; on which she enters fearlessly in one of the fragments of the Autobiography. In a marginal note on one of the printed letters in which Johnson writes: "Mrs. Davenant says you regain your health," — she remarks: "Mrs. Davenant neither knew nor cared, as she wanted her brother Harry Cotton to marry Lady Keith, and I

offered my estate with her. Miss Thrale said she wished to have nothing to do either with my family or my fortune. They were all cruel and all insulting." These fits of irritation and despondency never lasted long.

Her mode of bringing up her adopted nephew was more in accordance with her ultimate liberality, than with her early intentions of professions of teaching him to "work his way among our islanders." Instead of suffering him to travel to and from the University by coach, she insisted on his travelling post; and she remarked to the mother of a Welsh baronet, who was similarly anxious for the comfort and dignity of her heir, "Other people's children are baked in coarse common pie dishes, ours in patty-pans."

Before she died she had the satisfaction of seeing him sheriff of his county; and on carrying up an address in that capacity, he was knighted and became Sir John Salusbury Piozzi Salusbury. Miss Williams Wynn has preserved a somewhat apocryphal anecdote of his disinterestedness:

"When I read her (Mrs. P.'s) lamentations over her poverty, I could not help believing that Sir J. Salusbury had proved ungrateful to his benefactress. For the honour of human nature I rejoice to find this is not the case. When he made known to his aunt his wish to marry, she promised to make over to him the property of Brynbella. Even before the marriage was concluded she had distressed herself by her lavish expenditure at Streatham. I saw by the letters that

Gillow's bill amounted to near 2,400*l.*, and Mr. (the late Sir John) Williams tells me she had continually very large parties from London. Sir John Salusbury then came to her, offered to relinquish all her promised gifts and the dearest wish of his heart, saying he should be most grateful to her if she would only give him a commission in the army and let him seek his fortune. At the same time he added that he made this offer because all was still in his power, but that from the moment he married, she must be aware that it would be no longer so, that he should not feel himself justified in bringing a wife into distress of circumstances, nor in entailing poverty on children unborn. She refused; he married; and she went on in her course of extravagance. She had left herself a life income only, and large as it was, no tradesman would wait a reasonable time for payment; she was nearly eighty; and they knew that at her death nothing would be left to pay her debts, and so they seized the goods."

When Fielding, the novelist, rather boastingly avowed that he never knew, and believed he never should know, the difference between a shilling and sixpence, he was told: "Yes, the time will come when you will know it—when you have only eighteen pence left." If the author of "Tom Jones" could not be taught the value of money, we must not be too hard on Mrs. Piozzi for not learning it, after lesson upon lesson in the hard school of "impecuniosity." Whilst Piozzi

* If the estate was settled in the usual manner, he would have only a life estate; and I believe it was so settled.

lived, her affairs were faithfully and carefully administered. Although they built Brynbella, spent a good deal of money on Streatham, and lived handsomely, they never wanted money. He had a moderate fortune, the produce of his professional labours, and left it, neither impaired nor materially increased, to his family.

There is hardly a family of note or standing within visiting distance of their place, that has not some tradition or reminiscence to relate concerning them; and all agree in describing him as a worthy good sort of man, obliging, inoffensive, kind to the poor, principally remarkable for his devotion to music, and utterly unable to his dying day to familiarise himself with the English language or manners. It is told of him that being required to pay a turnpike toll near the house of a country neighbour whom he was on his way to visit, he took it for granted that the toll went into his neighbour's pocket, and proposed setting up a gate near Brynbella with the view of levying toll in his turn.

"Amongst the company," says Moore, "was Mrs. John Kemble. She mentioned an anecdote of Piozzi, who, upon calling upon some old lady of quality, was told by the servant, she was 'indifferent.' 'Is she indeed?' answered Piozzi huffishly, 'then pray tell her I can be as indifferent as she;' and walked away."*

Till he was disabled by the gout, his principal occupation was his violin, and the existing superstition of the country is that his spirit, playing on his favourite instrument, still haunts one wing of Brynbella. If

* Moore's Memoirs, vol. iv. p. 329.

he designed the building, his architectural taste does not merit the praises she lavishes on it. The exterior is not prepossessing; but there is a look of comfort about the house; the interior is well arranged: the situation, which commands a fine and extensive view of the upper part of the valley of the Clywd, is admirably chosen; the garden and grounds are well laid out; and the walks through the woods on either side, especially one called the Lovers' Walk, are remarkably picturesque. Altogether, Brynbella may be fairly held to merit the appellation of a "pretty villa." The name implies a compliment to Piozzi's country as well as to his taste; for she meant it to typify the union between Wales and Italy in his and her own proper persons.

Dr. Burney, in a letter to his daughter, thus describes the position and feelings of the couple towards each other in 1808:—

"During my invalidity at Bath I had an unexpected visit from your Streatham friend, of whom I had lost sight for more than ten years. She still looks very well, but is graver, and candour itself; though she still says good things, and writes admirable notes and letters, I am told, to my granddaughters C. and M. of whom she is very fond. We shook hands very cordially, and avoided any allusion to our long separation and its cause. The *caro sposo* still lives, but is such an object from the gout, that the account of his sufferings made me pity him sincerely; he wished, she told me, 'to see his old and worthy friend,' and *un beau matin*. I could not refuse compliance with his wish. She nurses him

with great affection and tenderness, never goes out or has company when he is in pain."

Piozzi died of gout at Brynbella in March 1809, and was buried in a vault constructed by her desire in Drymerchion Church. There is a portrait of him (period and painter unknown) still preserved amongst the family portraits at Brynbella. It is that of a good-looking man of about forty, in a straight-cut brown coat with metal buttons, lace frill and ruffles, and some leaves of music in his hand. There are also two likenesses of Mrs. Piozzi: one a half length (kit-kat) taken apparently when she was about forty; the other a miniature of her at an advanced age. Both confirm her description of herself as being too strong-featured to be pretty. The hands in the half length are gloved.

Brynbella continued her headquarters till 1814, when she gave it up to Sir John Salusbury. From that period she resided principally at Bath and Clifton, occasionally visiting Streatham or making summer trips to the seaside. Her way of life after Piozzi's death may be collected from the letters, with the exception of one strange episode towards the end. When nearly eighty, she took a fancy for an actor named Conway, who came out on the London boards in 1813, and had the honour of acting Romeo and Jaffier to the Juliet and Belvidera of Miss O'Neill (Lady Becher). He also acted with her in Dean Milman's fine play, "Fazio." But it was his ill fate to reverse Churchill's famous lines: —

> "Before such merits all objections fly,
> Pritchard's genteel, and Garrick's six feet high."

Conway was six feet high, and a very handsome man to boot; but his advantages were purely physical; not a spark of genius animated his fine features and commanding figure, and he was battling for a moderate share of provincial celebrity, when Mrs. Piozzi fell in with him at Bath. It has been rumoured in Flintshire that she wished to marry him, and offered Sir John Salusbury a large sum in ready money (which she never possessed) to give up Brynbella (which he could not give up), that she might settle it on the new object of her affections. But none of the letters or documents that have fallen in my way afford even plausibility to the rumour, and some of the testamentary papers in which his name occurs, go far towards discrediting the belief that her attachment ever went beyond admiration and friendship expressed in exaggerated terms.

Conway threw himself overboard and was drowned in a voyage from New York to Charleston in 1828. His effects were sold at New York, and amongst them a copy of the folio edition of Young's "Night Thoughts," in which he had made a note of its having been presented to him by his "dearly attached friend, the celebrated Mrs. Piozzi." In the preface to "Love Letters of Mrs. Piozzi, Written when she was Eighty, to William Augustus Conway," published in London in 1842, it is stated that the originals, seven in number, were purchased by an American "lady," who permitted a "gentleman" to take copies and use them as he might think fit. What this "gentleman" thought fit, was to publish them with

a catchpenny title and an alleged extract by way of motto to sanction it. The genuineness of the letters is doubtful, and the interpolation of three or four sentences would alter their entire tenor. But taken as they stand, their language is not warmer than an old woman of vivid fancy and sensibility might have deemed warranted by her age. *L'age n'a point de sexe;* and no one thought the worse of Madame Du Deffand for the impassioned tone in which she addressed Horace Walpole, whose dread of ridicule induced him to make a most ungrateful return to her fondness. Years before the formation of this acquaintance, Mrs. Piozzi had acquired the difficult art of growing old; *je sais vieillir:* she dwells frequently but naturally on her age: she contemplates the approach of death with firmness and without self-deception; and her elasticity of spirit never for a moment suggests the image of an antiquated coquette. Of the seven letters in question, the one cited as most compromising is the sixth, in which Conway is exhorted to bear patiently a rebuff he had just received from some younger beauty:

"'Tis not a year and quarter since dear Conway, accepting of my portrait sent to Birmingham, said to the bringer, 'Oh if *your lady* but retains her friendship: oh if I can but keep *her* patronage, I care not for the rest.' And now, when that friendship follows you through sickness and through sorrow; now that her patronage is daily-rising in importance: upon a lock of hair given or refused by une petite Traitresse, hangs all the happiness of my once high-spirited and high-blooded

friend. Let it not be so. EXALT THY LOVE: DEJECTED HEART — and rise superior to such narrow minds. Do not however fancy she will ever be punished in the way you mention: no, no; she'll wither on the thorny stem dropping the faded and ungathered leaves: — a China rose, of no good scent or flavour — false in apparent sweetness, deceitful when depended on — unlike the flower produced in colder climates, which is sought for in old age, preserved *even after death*, a lasting and an elegant perfume, — a medicine, too, for those whose shattered nerves require *astringent remedies*.

"And now, dear Sir, let me request of you — to love yourself—and to reflect on the necessity of not dwelling on any *particular subject* too long, or too intensely. It is really very dangerous to the health of body and soul. Besides that our time here is but short; a mere preface to the great book of eternity: and 'tis scarce worthy of a reasonable being not to keep the end of human existence so far in view that we may tend to it — either directly or obliquely in every step. This is preaching — but remember how the sermon is written at three, four, and five o'clock by an octogenary pen — a heart (as Mrs. Lee says) twenty-six years old: and as H. L. P. feels it to be,— ALL YOUR OWN. Suffer your dear noble self to be in some measure benefited by the talents which are left *me*; your health to be restored by soothing consolations while *I remain here*, and am able to bestow them. All is not lost yet. You *have* a friend, and that friend is PIOZZI."

Conway's "high blood" was as great a recommendation to Mrs. Piozzi as his good looks, and he vindicated

his claim to noble descent by his conduct, which was disinterested and gentlemanlike throughout.

Moore sets down in his Diary, April 28, 1819: "Breakfasted with the Fitzgeralds. Took me to call on Mrs. Piozzi; a wonderful old lady; faces of other times seemed to crowd over her as she sat,—the Johnsons, Reynoldses, &c. &c.: though turned eighty, she has all the quickness and intelligence of a gay young woman."

One of the most characteristic feats or freaks of this extraordinary woman was the celebration of her eightieth birthday by a concert, ball, and supper, to between six and seven hundred people, at the Kingston Rooms, Bath, on the 27th January, 1820. At the conclusion of the supper, her health was proposed by Admiral Sir James Saumarez, and drunk with three times three. The dancing began at two, when she led off with her adopted son, Sir John Salusbury, dancing (according to the author of "Piozziana," an eye-witness) "with astonishing elasticity, and with all the true air of dignity which might have been expected of one of the best bred females in society."

When fears were expressed that she had done too much, she replied:—"No: this sort of thing is greatly in the mind; and I am almost tempted to say the same of growing old at all, especially as it regards those of the usual concomitants of age, viz., laziness, defective sight, and ill-temper."

"So far from feeling fatigued or exhausted on the following day by her exertions," remarks Sir James Fellowes in a note on this event, "she amused us by

her sallies of wit, and her jokes on 'Tully's Offices,' of which her guests had so eagerly availed themselves." Tully was the cook and confectioner, the Bath Gunter, who provided the supper.

Mrs. Piozzi died in May, 1821. Her death is circumstantially communicated in the following letter:—

"Hot Wells, May 5th, 1821.

"Dear Miss Willoughby,—It is my painful task to communicate to you, who have so lately been the kind associate of dearest Mrs. Piozzi, the irreparable loss we have all sustained in that incomparable woman and beloved friend.

"She closed her various life about nine o'clock on Wednesday, after an illness of ten days, with as little suffering as could be imagined under these awful circumstances. Her bed-side was surrounded by her weeping daughters: Lady Keith and Mrs. Hoare arrived in time to be fully recognized; Miss Thrale, who was absent from town, only just before she expired, but with the satisfaction of seeing her breathe her last in peace.

"Nothing could behave with more tenderness and propriety than these ladies, whose conduct, I am convinced, has been much misrepresented and calumniated by those who have only attended to *one* side of the history; but may all that is past be now buried in oblivion! Retrospection seldom improves our view of any subject. Sir John Salusbury was too distant, the close of her illness being so rapid, for us to entertain any expectation of his arriving in time to see the dear deceased.

"He only reached Clifton late *last* night. I have not yet seen him; my whole time has been devoted to the afflicted ladies. To you, who so well know my devoted attachment to Mrs. Piozzi, it is quite superfluous to speak of my *own* feelings, which I well know will become *more acute*, as the present hurry of business, in which we are all engaged, and the extreme bodily fatigue I have undergone, producing a sort of stupor in my mind, subsides. A scheme of rational happiness founded on dear Mrs. Piozzi's intentions of residing at Clifton, which I had too fondly, and perhaps *foolishly*, indulged, her great age being considered, is all overthrown, and a sad and aching void will usurp the place; but God's will be done! A few years more, from the apparently extraordinary vigour of her constitution, I had hoped to enjoy in her enchanting society; these will now be passed in regret; but *they* will also soon pass away, and all regrets will cease with *me*, as with the beloved being I must ever lament. You will probably see in the papers the last tribute I could render her of my true regard. It is highly appreciated, and warmly approved by her daughters, the most acceptable praise that can reach the heart of;

"Dear Miss Willoughby's obedient humble servant,

"P. S. PENNINGTON.

"I am fatigued to death with writing, but feel a solace in addressing you. Probably you will suppose the accident to the *leg* was the cause of this sudden catastrophe? Not at all; it was *perfectly cured*, and the manner in which it healed, contrary to all expectation, was considered a *proof* — a fallacious one it turned

out — of the purity and strength of her constitution. Inflammation in the intestines, over which medicine had no power, was the cause of her death. The accident to the leg which, in a younger subject, might have produced great alarm, excited none."

Mrs. Pennington* told a friend that Mrs. Piozzi's last words were: "I die in the trust and the fear of God." When she was attended by Sir George Gibbes, being unable to articulate, she traced a coffin in the air with her hands and lay calm. Her will and testamentary papers may help to clear up some disputed points in her biography.

The Will of Hester Lynch Piozzi, dated the 29th day of March, 1816, makes Sir John Salusbury Piozzi Salusbury heir to all her real and personal property with the exception of the following bequests:—

"To Sir James Fellowes Two Hundred Pounds: to Mr. Alexander Leak One Hundred Pounds; to his Son, Alexander Piozzi Leak, One Hundred Pounds; and to my maid-servant, Elizabeth Jones, One Hundred Pounds.

"Moreover, I do hereby make it my Request to the aforementioned Sir James Fellowes, that he will permit me to join his name with that of the aforesaid John Salusbury Piozzi Salusbury in the execution of these my settled purposes, and that they will cause to be duly paid my few debts and legacies, and that they will be careful to commit my body (wheresover I may die) to the vault constructed for our remains by my second husband, Gabriel Piozzi, in Dymerchion Church, Flintshire.

* Frequently mentioned in Miss Seward's Correspondence as the beautiful and agreeable Sophia Weston.

"And I do hereby nominate, constitute, and appoint the aforesaid Sir James Fellowes, and the aforesaid John Salusbury Piozzi Salusbury, Joint Executors of this my last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all former Wills by me made at any time.

"(*Signed*) HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI.

"In the presence of &c."

"The last Will and Testament of Hester Lynch Piozzi was this day opened by us at No. 36, Crescent, Clifton, in the presence of Viscountess Keith, Mr. and Mrs. Merrick Hoare, and Miss Thrale.

"JOHN SALUSBURY PIOZZI SALUSBURY,

"JAMES FELLOWES.

"Sunday, 6th May, 1821."

"Memorandum. — After I had read the Will, Lady Keith and her two sisters present, said they had long been prepared for the contents and for such a disposition of the property, and they acknowledged the validity of the Will.

"JAMES FELLOWES."

"Copy of a Letter of Requests of the late Mrs. Piozzi, dated Weston-Super-Mare, Monday, October 18th, 1819.

"My dear Friends and Executors,—This is a Letter of Requests; not formally attested, but I should suppose you would nevertheless *hold it sacred;* as I only forbear making it a Codicil from a notion of disturbing a testimentary disposition so favourable to Sir John Salusbury by any awkward additions. It is then my *request* that if you find a gold repeating watch in my possession,

you send it to William Augustus Conway, Esq. for whom I bought it; *his name inside.*

"If you find a Viner's patent alarum, give it to George Angelo Bell, for whom I bought it; *his name is inside.* My mother's portrait, by Zoffany, should go to Lady Keith, who alone of my family can remember her; Mr. Thrale's picture to his daughter who still bears his name. Sir James Fellowes has often promised me his assistance; I *hope* he will not at the *last moment deny* the requests of a friend he was once so partial to. I *hope* Sir John Salusbury will not consider these trifles — and my clothes to Elizabeth Bell — as any sensible diminution of what he will obtain as residuary legatee to his affectionate aunt,

"(*Signed*) HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI."

Copy of a note found with the Will of the late Mrs. Piozzi: —

"Penzance, 10th October, 1820.

"My dear Gentlemen,—Feeling unwell this evening, and full of apprehensions that I shall die before we meet again; I beg leave to request your care of a little red box deposited in my hands by Mr. Conway, last March or April; it has his name engraved in brass upon the top, *as I received it,* Miss Williams being witness: and I wrote William Augustus Conway on the bottom, to assure *him* I would keep it safe. The contents are (as he told me) of value to *him*—letters, papers, &c. Pray be attentive to them, and give him his box again untouched, as you value your *own* honour and that of your poor departed friend,

"(*Signed*) HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI."

"Sir,—As one of the Executors of my late revered friend Mrs. Piozzi, I take the liberty of placing in your hands the accompanying draft (for £100), which was presented to me by that lady only two days before her death. I am very ready to acknowledge the acceptance of many acts of kindness during her *life*, but must decline appropriating to myself what I consider a *posthumous* benefaction, which more properly belongs to her heirs. Be good enough to dispose of the same as you may deem right.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"W. A. CONWAY.

"Bath, May 7th, 1821."

"York Hotel, May 8th, 1821.

"Sir James Fellowes presents his compliments to Mr. Conway and begs to acknowledge the receipt of his letter of yesterday, with its enclosure.

"Sir James hopes that Mr. Conway will be assured of his readiness to do justice to his feelings and to appreciate as he ought, the handsome manner in which they have been expressed on the loss of so sincere a friend as the lamented Mrs. Piozzi.

"Sir James Fellowes will be under the painful necessity of returning to Clifton to-morrow, and will then consult with Sir John Salusbury and the relatives of the family, on the subject of Mr. Conway's letter."

The following correspondence was also found amongst the testamentary papers:—

"2, Upper Baker Street,

"May 23rd, 1821.

"SIR,—I will not trouble you with apologies for this

intrusion by an entire stranger to you, since I am well persuaded that I am writing to a gentleman and a man of honour, whose feelings will not only plead my excuse, but also advocate my request. I am informed that the papers and letters of my inestimable and lamented friend, Mrs. Piozzi, are deposited in your hands, and I beg as a favour, that you will have the goodness to return mine to me! In the full assurance that you will kindly grant it, I have the honour to be, Sir, your

"Most obedient servant,

"S. SIDDONS.

"Sir James Fellowes, Bart., at his house,
"near Newbury, Berkshire."

"Adbury House, near Newbury,
"May 28th, 1821.

"MADAM,—I beg to acknowledge your letter dated the 23rd, and which only reached me to-day.

"Sir John Salusbury and myself were left joint executors, by my incomparable and lamented friend, Mrs. Piozzi. The whole of her valuable papers are consigned to our care, and I hope soon to be able to arrange them. For the present they are sealed up at Bath, but I shall take the earliest opportunity of informing Sir John, when we meet, of your request, and I am persuaded he will be desirous of partaking with me the pleasure of attending to any wish expressed by Mrs. Siddons. I have the honour to be, Madam, with great respect, your most obedient servant,

"JAMES FELLOWES.

"To Mrs. Siddons."

One of her letters has been retained, and no one can be hurt by its being printed.

(No date; post-mark, Paddington, April 24, 1815.)

"My Dear Friend, — You were always kind and good to me, and I thank you most sincerely for this last proof of your affection. My affliction is deep indeed, but I do not sorrow as those who have no hope. I doubt not that Almighty wisdom and goodness orders all things for the ultimate happiness of His servants; and my grief for the loss of my dear and ever dutiful and affectionate son, is greatly alleviated in the humble hope that his exemplary virtues will find acceptance at the Throne of Mercy, through the mediation of our blessed Saviour. This third stroke has nevertheless sadly shaken me. 'I cannot but remember such things were, and were most precious to me.'

"So strange and unlooked for are all things around us, that the only good thing we can reckon upon with any certainty in this world, is *that one is far advanced upon one's journey to a better.* I am, my dear friend,

"Your faithfully affectionate

"S. Siddons.

"To Mrs. Piozzi, Bath."

In any endeavour to solve the difficult problem of Mrs. Piozzi's conduct and character, it should be kept in view that the highest testimony to her worth has been volunteered by those with whom she passed the last years of her life in the closest intimacy. She had become completely reconciled to Madame D'Arblay, with

whom she was actively corresponding when she died, and her mixed qualities of head and heart are thus summed up in that lady's Diary, May, 1821:

"I have lost now, just lost, my once most dear, intimate, and admired friend, Mrs. Thrale Piozzi, who preserved her fine faculties, her imagination, her intelligence, her powers of allusion and citation, her extraordinary memory, and her almost unexampled vivacity, to the last of her existence. She was in her eighty-second year, and yet owed not her death to age nor to natural decay, but to the effects of a fall in a journey from Penzance to Clifton. On her eightieth birthday she gave a great ball, concert, and supper, in the public rooms at Bath, to upwards of two hundred persons, and the ball she opened herself. She was, in truth, a most wonderful character for talents and eccentricity, for wit, genius, generosity, spirit, and powers of entertainment.

"She had a great deal both of good and not good, in common with Madame de Staël Holstein. They had the same sort of highly superior intellect, the same depth of learning, the same general acquaintance with science, the same ardent love of literature, the same thirst for universal knowledge, and the same buoyant animal spirits, such as neither sickness, sorrow, nor even terror, could subdue. Their conversation was equally luminous, from the sources of their own fertile minds, and from their splendid acquisitions from the works and acquirements of others. Both were zealous to serve, liberal to bestow, and graceful to oblige; and both were truly high-minded in prizing and praising whatever was

admirable that came in their way. Neither of them was delicate nor polished, though each was flattering and caressing; but both had a fund inexhaustible of good humour, and of sportive gaiety, that made their intercourse with those they wished to please attractive, instructive, and delightful; and though not either of them had the smallest real malevolence in their compositions, neither of them could ever withstand the pleasure of uttering a repartee, let it wound whom it might, even though each would serve the very person they goaded with all the means in their power. Both were kind, charitable, and munificent, and therefore beloved; both were sarcastic, careless, and daring, and therefore feared. The morality of Madame de Staël was by far the most faulty, but so was the society to which she belonged; so were the general manners of those by whom she was encircled."

There is one real point of similarity between Madame de Staël and Mrs. Piozzi, which has been omitted in the parallel. Both were treated much in the same manner by the amiable, sensitive, and unsophisticated Fanny Burney. In Feb. 1793, she wrote to her father, then at Paris, to announce her intimacy with a small "colony" of distinguished emigrants settled at Richmond, the cynosure of which was the far-famed daughter of Necker. He writes to caution her on the strength of a suspicious *liaison* with M. de Narbonne. She replies by declaring her belief that the charge is a gross calumny. "Indeed, I think you could not spend a day with them and not see that their commerce is that of

pure, but exalted and most elegant friendship. I would, nevertheless, give the world to avoid being a guest under their roof, now that I have heard even the shadow of such a rumour."

If Mr. Croker was right*, she was then in her forty-second year; at all events, no tender, timid, delicate maiden, ready to start at a hint or semblance of impropriety; and she waived her scruples without hesitation when they stood in the way of her intercourse with M. D'Arblay, to whom she was married in July 1793, he being then employed in transcribing Madame de Staël's Essay on the Influence of the Passions.

As to the proposed parallel, with all due deference to Madame D'Arblay's proved sagacity aided by her personal knowledge of her two gifted friends, it may be suggested that they presented fewer points of resemblance than any two women of at all corresponding celebrity. The superiority in the highest qualities of mind will be awarded without hesitation to the French woman, although M. Thiers terms her writings the perfection of mediocrity. She grappled successfully with some of the weightiest and subtlest questions of social and political science; in criticism, she displayed powers which Schlegel might have envied while he aided their fullest development in her "Germany;" and her "Corinne" ranks amongst the best of those works of

* I have heard that an elder daughter of Dr. Burney, who died before the birth of the authoress, was also christened Frances, and that it was the register of her baptism to which Mr. Croker triumphantly appealed.

fiction which excel in description, reflection, and sentiment, rather than in pathos, fancy, stirring incident or artfully contrived plot. But her tone of mind was so essentially and notoriously masculine, that when she asked Talleyrand whether he had read her "Delphine," he answered, "Non, Madame, mais on m'a dit que nous y sommes tous les deux déguisés en femmes."* This was a material drawback on her agreeability; in a moment of excited consciousness, she exclaimed, that she would give all her fame for the power of fascinating; and there was no lack of bitterness in her celebrated repartee to the man who, seated between her and Madame Recamier, boasted of being between Wit and Beauty, "Oui, et sans posséder ni l'un ni l'autre."† The view from Richmond Park she called "calme et animée, ce qu'on doit être, et que je ne suis pas."

In London she was soon voted a bore by the wits and people of fashion. She thought of convincing whilst they thought of dining. Sheridan and Brummell delighted in mystifying her. Byron complained that she was

* "To understand the point of this answer," says Mr. Mackintosh, "it must be known that an old countess is introduced in the novel full of cunning, finessing, and trick, who was intended to represent Talleyrand, and Delphine was intended for herself."—*Life of Sir James Mackintosh*, vol. ii. p. 453.

† This *mot* is given to Talleyrand in Lady Holland's Life of Sydney Smith, But it may be traced to one mentioned by Hannah More in 1787, as then current in Paris. One of the *notables* fresh from his province was teased by two *petits maîtres* to tell them who he was. "Eh bien donc, le voici: je suis ni sot ni fat, mais je suis entre les deux."—*Memoirs of Hannah More*, vol. ii. p. 57.

always talking of himself or herself*, and concludes his account of a dinner-party by the remark:—"But we got up too soon after the women; and Mrs. Corinne always lingers so long after dinner, that we wish her—in the drawing-room." In another place he says: "I saw Curran presented to Madame de Staël at Mackintosh's; it was the grand confluence between the Rhone and the Saône, and they were both so d—d ugly that I could not help wondering how the best intellects of France and England could have taken up respectively such residences." He afterwards qualifies this opinion: "Her figure was not bad; her legs tolerable; her arms good: altogether I can conceive her having been a desirable woman, allowing a little imagination for her soul, and so forth. She would have made a great man."

This is just what Mrs. Piozzi never would have made. Her mind, despite her masculine acquirements, was thoroughly feminine: she had more tact than genius, more sensibility and quickness of perception than depth, comprehensiveness, or continuity of thought. But her very discursiveness prevented her from becoming wearisome: her varied knowledge supplied an inexhaustible store of topics and illustrations; her lively fancy placed them in attractive lights; and her mind has been well likened to a kaleidoscope which, whenever its glittering and heterogeneous contents are moved or shaken, surprises by some new combination of colour or of form.

* Johnson told Boswell: "You have only two topics, yourself and myself, and I am heartily sick of both."

She professed to write as she talked; but her conversation was doubtless better than her books: her main advantages being a well-stored memory, fertility of images, aptness of allusion, and *apropos*.

In the course of his famous definition or description of wit, Barrow says: "Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying: sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense or the affinity of their sound." If this be so, she possessed it in abundance. In a letter, dated Bath, 26th April, 1818,—about the time when Talleyrand said of Lady F. S.'s robe: "*Elle commence trop tard et finit trop tôt*,"—she writes:

"A genteel young clergyman, in our Upper Crescent, told his mamma about ten days ago, that he had lost his heart to pretty Miss Prideaux, and that he must absolutely marry her or die. *La chère mère* of course replied gravely: 'My dear, you have not been acquainted with the lady above a fortnight: let me recommend you to see more of her.' 'More of her!' exclaimed the lad, 'why I have seen down to the fifth rib on each side already.' This story will serve to convince Captain T. Fellowes and yourself, that as you have always acknowledged the British Belles to *exceed* those of every other nation, you may now say with truth, that they *outstrip* them."

On the 1st July, 1818:

"The heat has certainly exhausted my faculties, and I have but just life enough left to laugh at the fourteen

tailors who, united under a flag with '*Liberty and Independence*' on it, went to vote for some of these gay fellows, I forget which, but the motto is ill chosen, said I, they should have written up, '*Measures not Men.*'"

Her piety was genuine; and old-fashioned politicians, whose watchword is Church and King, will be delighted with her politics. Literary men, considering how many curious inquiries depend upon her accuracy, will be more anxious about her truthfulness, and I have had ample opportunities of testing it; having not only been led to compare her statements with those of others, but to collate her own statements of the same transactions or circumstances at distant intervals or to different persons. It is difficult to keep up a large correspondence without frequent repetition. Sir Walter Scott used to write precisely the same things to three or four fine-lady friends, and Mrs. Piozzi could no more be expected to find a fresh budget of news or gossip for each epistle than the author of "Waverley." Thus, in 1815, she writes to a Welch baronet from Bath:

"We have had a fine Dr. Holland here.* He has seen and written about the Ionian Islands; and means now to practise as a physician, exchanging the Cyclades, say we wits and wags, for the Sick Ladies. We made quite a lion of the man. I was invited to every house he

* Sir Henry Holland, Bart., who, with many other titles to distinction, is one of the most active and enterprising of modern travellers.

visited at for the last three days; so I got the *Queue du lion* despairing of *le Cœur*."

Two other letters written about the same time contain the same piece of intelligence and the same joke. She was very fond of writing marginal notes; and after annotating one copy of a book, would take up another and do the same.* I have rarely detected a substantial variation in her narratives, even in those which were more or less dictated by pique; and as she constantly drew upon the "Thraliana" for her materials, this, having been carefully and calmly compiled, affords an additional guarantee for her accuracy.

She sometimes gives anecdotes about authors. Thus, in the letter just quoted, she says: "Lord Byron protests his wife was a fortune without money, a belle without beauty, and a blue-stocking without either wit or learning." But her literary information grew scanty as she grew old; and her opinions of the rising authors are principally valuable as indications of the obstacles which nascent reputations must overcome. "Pindar's fine remark respecting the different effects of music on different characters, holds equally true of genius: so many as are not delighted by it, are disturbed, perplexed, irritated. The beholder either recognises it as a projected form of his own being, that moves before him with a glory round its head, or recoils from it as a spectre." † The octogenarian critic of the

* A copy of Boswell's Life of Johnson, annotated by her like Dr. Wellesley's, is in the possession of Mr. Bohn, the eminent publisher.

† Coleridge, "Aids to Reflections."

Johnsonian school recoils from "Frankenstein" as from an incarnation of the Evil Spirit: she does not know what to make of the "Tales of My Landlord;" and she inquires of an Irish acquaintance whether she retained recollection enough of her own country to be entertained with "that strange caricature, Castle Rack Rent." Contemporary judgments such as these (not more extravagant than Horace Walpole's) are to the historian of literature what fossil remains are to the geologist.

Although perhaps no biographical sketch was ever executed, as a labour of love, without an occasional attack of what Lord Macaulay calls the *Lues Boswelliana* or fever of admiration, I hope it is unnecessary for me to say that I am not setting up Mrs. Piozzi as a model letter-writer, or an eminent author, or a pattern of the domestic virtues, or a fitting object of hero or heroine worship in any capacity. All I venture to maintain is, that her life and character, if only for the sake of the "associate forms," deserve to be vindicated against unjust reproach, and that she has written many things which are worth snatching from oblivion or preserving from decay.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

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"The circumstances," says Sir James Fellowes, "under which she was induced to write them, were purely accidental. During the last fifty years of her life, she had made a collection of pocket-books, in which it was her constant practice to write down her conversations and anecdotes, as well as her remarks upon the recent publications. They were tied together and carefully preserved; and on one occasion Mrs. Piozzi, pointing to them, observed to me: 'These you will one day have to look over with Salusbury (my co-executor), together with the 'Thraliana;' I have never had courage to open them, but to your honour and joint care I shall leave them.' These memoranda would no doubt form a literary curiosity. At the time the conversation took place at Bath on this interesting topic, I urged Mrs. Piozzi to write down some reminiscences of her own times, and some of those amusing anecdotes I had heard her relate, and which have never been published, adding to my request, the value they would be to posterity and the obligation conferred upon myself. It

was her nature to be grateful for any trifling act of kindness, and as I had the good fortune to possess her friendship and favourable opinion, she indulged my curiosity to learn her history by presenting me with this sketch of her life (oh, she wrote expressly for me), as the strongest proof (she observed) of her confidence and esteem. These are the facts connected with the 'Autobiographical Memoirs.'"

The author of "Piozziana" says: "I called on her one day, and at an early hour by her desire; when she showed me a heap of what are termed pocket-books, and said she was sorely embarrassed upon a point, upon which she condescended to say she would take my advice. 'You see in that collection,' she continued, 'a diary of mine of more than *fifty* years of my life. I have scarcely omitted anything which occurred to me during the time I have mentioned. My books contain the conversation of every person of almost every class with whom I have had intercourse; my remarks on what was said; downright facts and scandalous *on dits;* personal portraits and anecdotes of the characters concerned; criticisms on the publications and authors of the day, &c. Now I am approaching the grave, and am agitated by doubts as to what I should do — whether to burn my manuscripts or leave them to futurity. Thus far my decision is to destroy my papers. Shall I or shall I not?' I took the freedom of saying, 'By no means do an act which done cannot be amended; keep your papers safe from prying eyes, and at least trust them to the discretion of survivors.'"

The heap of pocket-books must have been a very large heap, for a diary so kept would require at least one a-week. "Thraliana," now in the possession of the Rev. G. A. Salusbury (the eldest son of Sir John Salusbury), is contained in six books, of about 300 pages each, and extends over thirty-two years and a half. The first entry is in these words: "It is many years since Doctor Samuel Johnson advised me to get a little book and write in it all the little anecdotes which might come to my knowledge, all the observations I might make or hear, all the verses never likely to be published, and, in fine, everything that struck me at the time. Mr. Thrale has now treated me with a repository, and provided it with the pompous title of 'Thraliana.' I must endeavour to fill it with nonsense new and old.—15th September, 1776." The last: "30th March, 1809.—Everything most dreaded has ensued. . . . All is over, and my second husband's death is the last thing recorded in my first husband's present. Cruel Death!"

HER STORY OF HER LIFE.

I HEARD it asserted once in a mixt company that few men of ever so good a family could recollect, immediately on being challenged, the maiden names of their four great-grandmothers: they were not Welsh men. My father's two grandames were Bridget Percival, daughter to a then Lord Egmont, and Mary Pennant of Downing, great aunt to the great naturalist. My mother claimed Hester Salusbury, heiress of Lleweney Hall, as one of *her* grandmothers by marriage with Sir Robert Cotton; Vere Herbert, only daughter of Lord Torington, was the other.

The Salusbury pedigree is, indeed, perpetually referred to by Pennant in the course of his numerous volumes. It begins, I remember, with Adam de Saltzsburg, son to Alexander, Duke and Prince of Bavaria, who came to England with the Conqueror, and in 1070 had obtained for his valour a faire house in Lancashire, still known by name of Saltsbury Court. I showed an abstract of it to the Heralds in office at Saltzbourg, when there; and they acknowledged me a true descendant of their house, offering me all possible honours, to the triumphant delight of dear Piozzi, for whose amusement alone I pulled out the schedule. You will find a

modest allusion to the circumstance in page 283 of the Travel Book, 2nd vol.*

Among my immediate ancestors, third, fourth, or fifth, I forget which, from this *Father Adam*, was Henry Salusbury surnamed the Black; who having taken three noble Saracens with his own hand in the first Crusade, Cœur de Lion knighted him on the field, and to the old Bavarian Lion (see "Retrospection," p. 116) which adorned his shield, added three crescents for coat armour. On his return the king permitted him to settle, where he married — in Wales. He built Llewenney Hall, naming it Llew, — the Lion, and an ny, — for us; and set a brazen one upon its highest tower.

Among our popular Cambrian ballads, is one to the honour of this hero; still known to the harpers by name of Black Sir Harry. The civil wars of York and Lancaster called into public notice an immediate descendant of this warrior. His name, which also was *Henry*, stood recorded on a little obelisk, or rather cippus, by the road-side at Barnet, where the great battle was fought; *so* long, that I remember my father taking me out of the carriage to read it when I was quite a child.

* "There is a Benedictine convent seated on the top of a hill above the town (Salzbourg), under which lie its founders and protectors, the old dukes of Bavaria, which they are happy to shew travellers, with the registered account of their young prince Adam, who came over to our island with William, and gained a settlement. They were pleased when I observed to them that his blood was not yet wholly extinct amongst us."— *Observations and Reflections, &c.* This quotation is added by the Editor, and all notes and references, not expressly mentioned as by others, are by him.

He had shewn mercy to an enemy on that occasion, who looking on his device or imprese, flung himself at his feet with these words: —

Sat est prostrasse Leoni.

Our family have used that Leggenda as motto to the coat armour ever since.*

I guess not why this man was a Yorkist. The other party was natural to the inhabitants of North Wales, where the proud Duke of Somerset had married a daughter of his to the son of Owen Tudor by the Princess Katherine of France; another of whose sons, Fychan Tudor de Beraine, married *his* son to Jasper the Earl of Pembroke's daughter.† These were immediate parents to the father of Katherine de Berayne by Constance d'Aubigné, Dame d'Honneur to Anne de Bretagne. She brought him this one only child, an *heiress*, who was ward to Queen Elizabeth, and in her fifteenth year married, with her Majesty's consent, to Sir John Salusbury †, of Llewenney Hall, eldest of fourteen children. After his demise fair Katherine gave her hand to Sir Richard Clough, the splendid merchant, mentioned in a note to "Retrospection,"‡ whose daughter inherited Bachygraig, and married Roger Salusbury, youngest brother of Sir John, first husband to her mother. He quarrelling with the House of Llewenney, tore down the Lion and set it on his wife's seat called

* See "British Synonymy," vol. ii. p. 218.—*Mrs. P.*

† See "Retrospection," vol. i. p. 446.—*Mrs. P.*

‡ Vol. ii. p. 155.

Bachygraig, where it stood, newly gilt by Mr. Piozzi, two years ago (1813).

My father was lineally descended from this pair, and died possessed of dear old Bachygraig, while Sir John Salusbury's family soon finished in a daughter Hester, who, marrying Sir Robert Cotton of Combermere, gave him, and all her progeny by him, the name of Salusbury Cotton. She was immediate grandame to my dear mother; and thus in your little friend the two families remain united.

Will it amuse you to be told that Katherine de Berayne, after Sir Richard Clough's death, married Maurice Wynne, of Gwydir, whose family and fortune merged in that of the Berties? He was not, however, her last husband. She wedded Thelwall, of Plasyward, after she was quite an old woman. But the Berayne estate she left to my mother's great-grandfather, as heir to her first husband, Sir John Salusbury of Lleweney. My uncle sold it to Lord Kirkwall's father.*

But it will bring matters nearer home to tell you that my mother, who had 10,000*l.*, an excellent fortune in those days, besides an annuity for her mamma's life of 125*l.* per annum, who was living gaily with her brother, Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, and his wife, Lady Betty Tollemache, refused all suitors attracted by

* Lord Kirkwall sold the property to the Rev. Edward Hughes, whose son, William Lewis Hughes, the present possessor, was created Baron Dinorben, in 1831, of Kinmel Park, Denbighshire. The house was burnt down in 1840.—*Sir J. F.* Lord Dinorben was succeeded in his estates by his nephew, Hugh Robert Hughes, Esq.

her merits and beauty for love of her rakish cousin, John Salusbury of Bachygraig. He, unchecked by care of a father who died during the infancy of his sons, ran out the estate completely to nothing. *So* completely that the 10,000*l.* would scarcely pay debts and furnish them out a cottage in Caernarvonshire, where — after two or three dead things — I was born alive, and where they were forced by circumstances to remain, till my grandmother Lucy Salusbury — an exemplary creature — should die, and leave them free at least to mortgage or to sell, or to do *some*thing towards reinstating themselves in a less unbecoming situation.

Meanwhile *I* was their joint plaything, and although education was a word then unknown as applied to females, they had taught me to read and speak and think and translate from the French, till I was half a prodigy; and my father's brother Thomas, who was bred up for the ecclesiastical courts with poor papa's money, and who lived in London among the gay and great, said how *his* friends the Duke of Leeds, Lord Halifax, &c., would be delighted could they but see little Hester. My mother, however, thought it would be best to conciliate her own relations, and made *me*, I know not at how early an age, write a letter to my uncle Robert who had lately lost Lady Betty. The scheme prospered: grandmamma Salusbury of Bachygraig was dead, and Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton said he longed to kiss his sister and the little girl; to whom he was perhaps more willing to attach himself, as he had no progeny, and his only brother had

married, not much to please *him*, a portionless cousin of his own; Miss Cotton, of Etwall and Belleport, by whom he had many children, among which two only were favourites at Lleweney. An invitation followed, and we came to the *Old Hall* hung round with armour, which struck my infant eyes with wonder and delight.

My uncle soon began to dote on Fiddle, as he called me in fondness; and I certainly did not obtain his love by flattery, as I remember well this odd *tête-à-tête* conversation :—

"Come now, dear," said he, "that we are quite alone, tell me what you expected to see here at Llewenney." "I expected," replied I, "to see an old baronet." "Well, in *that* your expectation is not much disappointed; but why did you think of such stuff?" "Why just because papa and mamma was always saying to me and to one another at Bodvel, what the old baronet would think of this and that: they did it to frighten me I see now; but I thought to myself that kings and princes were but men, and God made *them* you know, Sir, and *they* made old baronets." "Incomparable Fiddle," exclaimed my uncle — "you will see a Mr. and Mrs. Clough at dinner to-day: do you know how to spell Clough?" "No," was the reply; "I never heard the name; but if it had been spelt like *buff*, you would not have asked me the question. They write it perhaps as we write *enough* — c, l, o, u, g, h."

What baby anecdotes are these, you cry. 'Tis so, but your poor friend certainly ceased being in any

wise a wonder after she was five years old, at which period we left Wales and came to my uncle's house in Albemarle Street, where he told my mother he should follow in less than two months; make a new will, and leave poor Fiddle 10,000*l.*, having understood that my parents had by their marriage settlement agreed to entail the old Bachygraig Estate on Thomas Salusbury, brother to papa, and then a doctor in the Commons; and on *his* sons, rather than their own daughter, if they had no male heir. I fancy some rough words passed concerning this. My uncle certainly but ill brooked my father's pride, and he still less willingly endured being informed that, if his quality friends would provide *him* some distant establishment, my mother and myself should share the old baronet's fortune. "No, no, Sir Robert," was the haughty answer, "if I go for a soldier, *your* sister shall carry the knapsack, and the little wench may have what I can work for." I have heard that our parting soon followed this conversation, and scarce were my infantine tears dried for leaving dear Llewenney and my half-adored uncle, before the news reached London of his sudden death by an apoplectic fit; in consequence of which, his brother, Sir Lynch Salusbury Cotton, came into everything by a temporary will kept in case of accidents till one more copious and correct should be formed.

Some traces yet remain upon my mind of poor mamma's anguish and of my father's violent expressions. She has related to me his desperate engagement with some quacks and projectors who pretended to find

lead on his encumbered estate, whilst *we* remained in town, and I became a favourite with the Duke and Duchess of Leeds, where I recollect often meeting the famous actor Mr. Quin, who taught me to speak Satan's speech to the sun in "Paradise Lost." When they took me to see him act Cato, I remember making him a formal courtesy, much to the Duchess's amusement, perhaps to that of the player. I was just six years old, and we sate in the stage-box, where I kept on studying the part with all my little power, not at all distracted by the lights or company, which they fancied would take my attention. The fireworks for the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle were the next sights my fancy was impressed with. We sate on a terrace belonging to the Hills of Tern—now Lord Berwick's family,—and David Garrick was there, and made me sit on his lap, feeding me with cates, &c.; because, having asked some one who sate near why they called those things that blew up, *Gerbes* in the bill of fare, *I* answered, "Because they are like wheat-sheaves, you see, and Gerbe is a wheat-sheaf in French."

When Garrick was intimate at Streatham Park more than twenty years afterwards, he did not like that story: it made him look older, at least *feel* older, than he wished, I suppose.

Lord Halifax was now, or soon after, head of the Board of Trade, and wished to immortalise his name—he had no sons—by colonising Nova Scotia. Cornwallis and my father, whom he patronised, were sent out, the *first persons* in every sense of the word; and poor

dear mamma was left *sine pane* (almost, I believe), certainly *sine nummo*, with her odd little charge, a girl without a guinea, whose mind however she ceased not to cultivate in every possible manner. For French, writing, and arithmetic, I had no instructor but herself; and when she went from home where I could not be taken, my temporary abode was the great school in Queen Square, where Mrs. Dennis and her brother, the Admiral Sir Peter Dennis, said I was qualified, at eight years old, for teacher rather than learner; and he actually did instruct me in the rudiments of navigation, as the globes were already familiar to me. The small-pox, however, and measles interrupted my studies for awhile, when my Grandmother Cotton invited my mother and myself to spend a summer in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, where she had a fine country-seat called East Hyde, not far from Luton, to which I made reference in "Retrospection" (vol. ii. p. 434). This lady, daughter to Sir Thomas Lynch, after whom I was named, had possessed an immense fortune in Jamaica; but being left an orphan at five years old, was, as she always said and I believe, purchased of Lord Torington, her mother's brother, by Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton for his son Thomas, the child he educated himself in the Tower of London, when confined there on account of his correspondence with the Electress Sophia.*

* Sir William Wraxall, in his Historical Memoirs (vol. i. p. 304), in reference to the adventures of the Stuart family, relates an extraordinary anecdote about the destroying of the correspondence of the Electress Sophia with the Court of St. Germains.

Certain it is that Lady Cotton was scarce fifteen years older than her own eldest son, my dear Uncle Robert, husband of Lady Betty Tollemache; which she considered as little to the honour of her father-in-law, who, she believed, obtained her fortune to his family by any means he could.

She had made a second choice when left a widow at thirty-seven years old, with many children, all mortally offended at her marrying again; but Captain King was dead, and they were reconciled at the time I am speaking of. At East Hyde I learned to love horses; and when my mother hoped I was gaining health by the fresh air, I was kicking my heels on a corn binn, and learning to drive of the old coachman; who, like every

"It ought not to surprise us (he says) on full consideration that *Sophia* should feel the warmest attachment to James the Second." On this Mrs. Piozzi remarks in the margin: — "It surprises *me* because my own great-grandfather was put into the Tower for corresponding with the Electress, by James the Second; and, being permitted to have any *one* of his family with him, chose a little boy, whom he taught to read and write there. My great-grandmother used to walk on Tower Hill till she saw her husband's signal poked out of some grated window. She was, by birth, Hester Salusbury, of Llewenney, and married to Sir Robert Cotton, of Combermere. I have seen, when a child, some of the Electress's letters signed Sophia. I remember nothing of them, but my uncle said they were full of Latin quotations: his son, father to Lord Combermere, burned them. I have looked in Lord Orford's miscellaneous works, and perceive that he and my friend Wraxall are of a mind about Sophia, of whose letters I can recollect only the odd signature, writing her name with a long *f*; but my cousin was a strange fellow, to throw them into the fire."

body else small and great, delighted in taking me for a pupil. Grandmamma kept four great ramping war-horses, *chevaux entiers*, for her carriage, with immense long manes and tails, which we buckled and combed; and when, after long practice, I showed her and my mother how two of them (poor Colonel and Peacock) would lick my hand for a lump of sugar or fine white bread, much were they amazed; much more when my skill in guiding them round the court-yard on the break could no longer be doubted or denied, though strictly prohibited for the future.

Among our Hertfordshire neighbours was Sir Henry Penrice, Judge of the Admiralty, who by the heiress of that branch of the Spencer family had only one daughter, the all-accomplished Anna Maria, who sought my mother's friendship the more eagerly, as she felt her heart daily more and more attached to my father's brother, Doctor Thomas Salusbury, of the Commons. My resemblance to my papa's whole family fixed me a favourite. My mother thought herself ill-used by them, and so in fact she was; her husband having left his brother a power of attorney to do everything for him, and he neglecting all mamma's entreaties, having forbore to change the hands of a mortgage upon that portion of the Welsh estate appointed for her jointure. Worse than *that:* my mother had scraped up, by dint of miserable privations, money for the purpose; but Uncle Thomas neglected his absent brother's interest, and the estate was lost. Love was, however, *his* apology; and a faint hope, perhaps, that so immense a fortune as that

of Miss Penrice might in some wise and on some future day benefit her child, hushed all mamma's complaints. The lovers married. Sir Henry died, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, both in his place, his title, and his estate.

My father had meanwhile, I fear, behaved perversely, quarrelling and fighting duels, and fretting his friends at home. My mother and my uncle, taking advantage of his last gloomy letter, begged him to return and share the gaieties of Offley Place, mentioned in "Retrospection," vol. i. p. 213: likewise, if I remember rightly, in the Travel Book (vol. ii.), where I recollect the plains of Kalin reminding me of our dear airings upon Lily Hoo, — the common near our house, joining to that of Offley, — scenes I shall see no more!

Here I reigned long, a fondled favourite. Kind Lady Salusbury felt her health decline, but told her husband she should die more happily, persuaded that he would not marry, as he was so attached to the good girl she now considered as her own, having nearly lost her precious life by a severe miscarriage. She, however, lived with him nine years, and said it were pity I should not learn Latin, Italian, and even Spanish, in all which she was conversant. Study was my delight, and such a patroness would have made stones students.

The Lisbon earthquake had impressed her strongly; and my mother, who was particularly fond of Spanish literature, made me translate a sermon in that language, written and preached in the Jewish synagogue at London by Isaac Netto,—whose name is all I can bring back

to mind,—and dedicate it to my dear aunt, Anna Maria Salusbury. A set of pearl and garnet ornaments, which I gave afterwards to Lady Keith, was my shining recompense; but such was my father's conduct, she never did love *him*. My mother she respected, and dear Doctor Collier, a constant guest, did all he could to keep us all happy in one another. Felicity, in this world, however, lasts not long. Poor Lady Salusbury died, at forty-one years old, of dropsy in the breast, and uncle *said* he had no kindness but for me. I think *I* did share his fondness with his stud; our stable was the first for hunters of enormous value,—for racers, too; and our house, after my aunt's death, was even *haunted* by young men who made court to the niece, and expressed admiration of the horses. Every suitor was made to understand my extraordinary value. Those who could read, were shown my verses; those who could not, were judges of my prowess in the field. It was my sport to mimic some, and drive others back, in order to make Dr. Collier laugh, who did not perhaps *wish* to see me give a heart away which he held completely in his hand, since he kindly became my preceptor in Latin, logic, rhetoric, &c.

We began, I think, before I was thirteen years old. On the day I was sixteen he confessed sixty-four, I remember, and said he was just four times my age, so I suppose he was. The difference or agreement never crossed my mind, nor seemed to have crossed his. A friendship more tender, or more unpolluted by interest or by vanity, never existed; love had no place at all in

the connection, nor had he any rival but my *mother*. *Their* influence was of the same kind, and hers the strongest; but it was not till after poor papa's death that I observed she looked on Collier with a jealous eye. We were scarce *all* of us enough to manage with my father's red-hot temper. It was daily endangering our alienation of Sir Thomas Salusbury's fondness, which the arrival of a new neighbour put still more to hazard. We should have made home more agreeable.

My uncle would not then have run to the smiling widow of Wellbury — just at our Park gate — the Honourable Mrs. King, whose blandishments drew him from dear Offley, and made our removal to our London House less painful. The summer before this removal had produced to *me* a new vexation. Lord Halifax was become lieutenant of Ireland, and my father made one of his numerous escort, delighting to attend his patron through his own country, and show him the wonders of Wales. Mamma and I remained at Offley doing the honours. Doctor Collier was in London upon business. My uncle had been to town for a night or two, and returned to tell us what an excellent, what an incomparable young man he had seen, who was, in short, a model of perfection, ending his panegyric by saying that he was a *real sportsman*. Seeing me disposed to laugh, he looked very grave; said he expected us to like him, and that seriously. The next day Mr. Thrale followed his eulogist, and applied himself so diligently to gain my mother's attention—aye, and her heart, too,—that there was little doubt of her approving the pre-

tensions of so very showy a suitor—if suitor he was to *me*, who certainly had not a common share in the compliments he paid to my mother's wit, beauty, and elegance.

His father, he said, was born in our village at Offley, of mean parents, but had made a prodigious fortune by his merits; and the people all looked with admiration at his giving 5*s.* to a poor boy who lay on the bank, because he was sure his father had been such a boy. In a week's time the country catched the notion up that Miss Salusbury's husband had been suddenly found by meeting Sir Thomas at the house of Mr. Levinz, a well-known *bon vivant* of those days, — they were not then called amphitryons,—who kept a gay house and a gay lady at Brompton, where he entertained the gay fashionists of 1760. The chaplain of Offley Place, a distant relation of ours, — uncle I think to this Sir Robert Salusbury whom you met once in Park Street (Bath),— having undisclosed hopes of his own to get the heiress, not only took alarm, but cunningly conveyed that alarm to my father, who, when he came home, said he saw his girl already half disposed of without his own consent, and swore I should not be exchanged for a barrel of porter, &c.

Vain were all my assurances that nothing resembled love *less* than Mr. Thrale's behaviour: vain my promises that no step on my part should be taken without his concurrence; although I clearly understood, and wrote Dr. Collier word so, that my uncle made this marriage the condition of his favour quite ap-

parently, and that certain ruin would follow my rejection. The letter, perhaps, still exists in which I declared my resolution to adhere to the maxims of filial duty *he* had taught me, and refuse (when I should be asked) any offer, however tempting, that should seek to seduce me from *his* authority under which both myself and my mother were placed. By this time the brothers quarrelled and met no more. My father took us to London. My uncle solaced himself with visiting the widow; and after a miserable winter, which visits from Mr. Thrale—to my mother—rendered terrifying to *me* every day, from papa's violence of temper, a note came, sent in a sly manner, from Dr. Collier, to tell me (it was written in Latin) that Sir Thomas would certainly marry Mrs. King the Sunday following, and begged I would not say a syllable till the next day, when *he* would come and break the dreadful tidings to my father.

My countenance, however, showed, or his acuteness discovered, something he did not like; an accusation followed, that I received clandestine letters from Mr. Thrale, a circumstance I had certainly every just reason to deny, and felt extremely hurt, of course, at seeing myself disbelieved. After a fruitless and painful contest for many hours of this cruel evening, my spirits sunk, I fainted, and my father, gaining possession of the fatal billet, had to ask *my* pardon — poor unhappy soul! and in this fond misery spent we the hours till four o'clock in the morning. At nine we rose; he to go across the park in search of my maternal uncle, Sir

Lynch Salusbury Cotton, from whom, and from Dr. Crane, Prebendary of Westminster, he meant to seek counsel and comfort. Me, to the employment of calling our medical friend, Herbert Lawrence, to dinner by a billet of earnest request. *All of us were ill,* but by the time he came, my father died, and was brought us home a corpse, before the dining hour. This was December 1762, fifty-three years ago exactly. Yet are not my feelings blunted!

The Will gave to my mother his Bachygraig House and estate for life, charged with 5000*l.* for me; to which my uncle, in consideration perhaps of my poor father's having paid every expense of his education at Cambridge, perhaps in recollection of having lost him a farm of 100*l.* a-year, added 5000*l.* more; with which (and expectations of course) Mr. Thrale deigned to accept my undesired hand, and in ten months from my poor father's death, were *both* the marriages he feared accomplished.

My uncle went himself with me to church, gave me away, dined with us at Streatham Park, returned to Hertfordshire, wedded the widow, and then scarce ever saw or wrote to either of us; leaving me to conciliate as I could, a husband who was indeed much kinder than I counted on, to a *plain girl,* who had not one attraction in his eyes, and on whom he never had thrown five minutes of his time away, in any interview unwitnessed by company, even till after our wedding-day was done!

My mother staid with us, however, so did her niece,

Miss Hester Salusbury Cotton, now Lady Corbet. Mr. Murphy was introduced, and the facetious Georgey Bodens, as the men called him. Lord Carhampton's father, Simon Luttrell, afterwards known to all the town by the emphatic title "King of Hell," * besides a very sickly old physician, who seemed as if living with us, Dr. Fitzpatrick, a Roman Catholic; the rest were professed Infidels.

When winter came, however, I was carried to my town residence, Deadman's Place, Southwark; which house, no more than that in Surrey, had been seen by me till called on to inhabit it. Here, too, my mother quitted us, and lived at our old mansion in Dean Street, Soho, then no unfashionable part of the world, and thither I went—oh how willingly! to visit her every day. My husband's sisters † (who, like himself, were eminent for personal beauty) now called on me, looked at me, and, in modern phrase, seemed to *quiz* me, asking how I liked Dr. Fitzpatrick, their brother's Jesuit friend? I answered drily, that the Doctor was well-read and well-bred, apparently in extreme ill health (he was a physician), and that Mr. Thrale's friends must necessarily be mine. The ladies withdrew, disappointed, and I tried with all diligence to canvass the

* It was told of him that he challenged his son, the Colonel Luttrell (afterwards Earl of Carhampton) of Middlesex election celebrity, who refused to fight him, "not because he was his father, but because he was not a gentleman."

† Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Nesbitt (afterwards Mrs. Scott), and Lady Lade.

man whom *they* thought, and of course *I* thought, had so much influence; where if I gained none I must become a nuisance. The doctor had no more influence than myself; but being so much *about* them all, could at least tell me *les tracasseries de famille* of which I was wholly ignorant. From him in due time I learned what had determined my husband's choice to *me*, till then a standing wonder. He had, the doctor said, asked several women, naming them, but all except *me* refused to live in the Borough, to which, and to his business, he observed, that Mr. Thrale was as unaccountably attached *now* as he had been in his father's time averse from both. And oh! cried the old man, how would my deceased friend have delighted in this happy sight! alluding to my state of pregnancy.

So summer came again, and Streatham Park was improving, and autumn came, and Lady Keith came, and I became of a *little* more importance. Confidence was no word in our vocabulary, and I tormented myself to guess who possessed that of Mr. Thrale; not his clerks certainly, who scarce dared approach *him*—much less come near *me;* whose place he said was either in the drawing-room or the bed-chamber. We kept, meantime, a famous pack of fox-hounds, at a hunting box near Croydon; but it was masculine for ladies to ride, &c. We kept the finest table possible at Streatham Park, but *his* wife was not to *think of the kitchen.* So I never knew what was for dinner till I saw it.

Driven thus on literature as my sole resource, no wonder if I loved my books and children. From a

gay life my mother held me fast. Those pleasures Mr. Thrale enjoyed alone; with *me* indeed they never would have suited; I was too often and too long confined. Although Doctor Johnson (now introduced among us) told me once, before *her* face, who deeply did resent it, that I lived like my husband's kept mistress,—shut from the world, its pleasures, or its cares.

The scene was soon to change. Fox-hounds were sold, and a seat in Parliament was suggested by our new inmate as more suitable to his dignity, more desirable in every respect. I grew useful now, *almost* necessary; wrote the advertisements, looked to the treats, and people to whom I was till then unknown, admired how happy Mr. Thrale must be in such a *wonder* of a wife.

I wondered all the while where his heart lay; but it was found at last, too soon for joy, too late almost for sorrow. A vulgar fellow, by name Humphrey Jackson, had, as the clerks informed me, all in a breath, compleat possession of it. He had long practised on poor Thrale's credulity, till, by mixing two cold liquors which produced heat perhaps, or two colourless liquors which produced brilliancy, he had at length prevailed on him to think he could produce beer too, without the *beggarly elements* of malt and hops. He had persuaded him to build a copper somewhere in East Smithfield, the very metal of which cost 2000*l.*, wherein this Jackson was to make experiments and conjure some curious stuff, which should preserve ships' bottoms from the worm; gaining from Government money to defray

these mad expenses. Twenty enormous vats, holding 1000 hogsheads each — costly contents! — Ten more holding 1000 barrels each, were constructed to stew in this pernicious mess; and afterwards erected, on I forget how much ground bought for the ruinous purpose.

That *all* were spoiled, was but a secondary sorrow. We had, in the commercial phrase, no beer to start for customers. We had no money to purchase with. Our clerks, insulted long, rebelled and *ratted*, but I held them in. A sudden run menaced the house, and death hovered over the head of its principal. I think some faint image of the distress appears in Doctor Johnson's forty-eighth letter, 1st. vol. But God tempers every evil with some good. Such was my charming mother's firmness, and such her fond attachment to us both, that our philosophical friend, embracing her, exclaimed, that he was equally charmed by her conduct, and edified by her piety. "Fear not the menaces of suicide," said he; "the man who has two such females to console him, never yet killed himself, and will not *now*. Of all the bankrupts made this dreadful year," continued he, "none have destroyed themselves but married men; who would have risen from the weeds undrowned, had not the women clung about and sunk them, stifling the voice of reason with their cries." Ah, Sir James Fellowes, and have not I too been in a ship on fire *, not for two hours, but for two full weeks, be-

* Alluding to the fire on board an East Indiaman, in which Sir James Fellowes was passenger.

tween the knowledge of my danger and the end on't?

Well! first we made free with our mother's money, her little savings! about 3000*l.*—'twas all she had; and, big as I was with child, I drove down to Brighthelmstone, to beg of Mr. Scrase 6000*l.* more — he gave it us — and Perkins, the head clerk, had never done repeating my short letter to our master, which only said, "I have done my errand, and you soon shall see returned, *whole*, as I hope — your heavy but faithful messenger, H. L. T."

Perkins' sons are now in possession of the place, their father but lately dead. Dear Mr. Scrase was an old gouty solicitor, retired from business, friend and contemporary of my husband's father. Mr. Rush lent us 6000*l.*, Lady Lade 5000*l.* — our debts, including those of Humphrey Jackson, were 130,000*l.*, besides borrowed money. Yet in *nine years* was every shilling paid; *one*, if not *two* elections well contested; and we *might*, at Mr. Thrale's death, have had money, had he been willing to listen to advice, as you will see by our correspondence, which it is now time for you to begin, and be released from these scenes of calamity. The baby that I carried lived an *hour* — my mother a year; but she left our minds more easy. I lay awake twelve nights and days, I remember, 'spite of all art could do; but here I am, vexing your tired ear with past afflictions.

You will see that many letters were suppressed. But as you have probably thought more of my literary, than

of my moral or social existence, *though I hope not*, it will be right at least to say that it was during *the winters* of those happy years when I reigned Queen at Offley Place all summer, that Hogarth made me sit for his fine picture of the Lady's Last Stake, now in possession of Lord Charlemont.

It was then, too, when I was about thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen years old, that I took a fancy to write in the "St. James's Chronicle," unknown to my parents and my tutor too: it was my sport to see them reading, studying, blaming or praising their own little whimsical girl's performances; but such was their admiration of one *little verse thing*, that I could not forbear owning it, and am sorry that no copy has, I believe, been kept.

The little poetical trash I *did* write in *earnest*, is preserved somewhere, perhaps in "Thraliana," which I *promised* to Mrs. Mostyn; perhaps in a small repository I prepared for dear Salusbury, before our final parting: such I meant it to be; but have no guess how you will find the stuff, or whether he ever thought it worth his while to keep old aunt's school exercises—such he would probably and naturally consider them. There is a little poem called "Offley Park" I know; another "On my poor Aunt Anna Maria's favourite Ash Tree;" and one styled "The Old Hunter's Petition for Life," written to save dear Forester from being shot because grown superannuated. There is a little odd metaphysical toy beside, written to divert Doctor Collier after the death of his dog Pompey, for

whom James Harris made a Greek epitaph, of which this is the English meaning, as I remember; but no doubt *all is lost*, and these verses are *not* mine. I forget whose though:—

"Here what remains of Pompey lies,
Handsome, generous, faithful, wise.
Then shouldst thou, friend, possess a bitch
In nature's noble gifts as rich;
When Death shall take her, let her have
With Pompey here one common grave;
So from their mingled dust shall rise
A race of dogs as good and wise:
Dogs who disease shall never know,
Rheumatic ache or gouty toe;
Nor feel the dire effects of tea,
Nor show decay by cachexy.
For if aright the future Fates I read,
Immortal are the dogs their pregnant dust shall breed."

The great James Harris was no disdainer of trifles. He wrote the two comical dialogues at the end of "David Simple," an old novel composed by Doctor Collier's sister, who was dead before I knew him, in conjunction with Sally Fielding, whose brother was author of "Tom Jones," not yet obsolete. James Harris gave me his "Hermes" interleaved, that I might write my remarks on it, proving my attention to philosophical grammar, for which study I had shown him signs of capacity, I trust; but Collier would not suffer him to talk metaphysics in my hearing, unless he himself was the respondent. Oh what conversations! What correspondences were these! never renewed after my wedding day, October 11th, 1763. Dr. Johnson was perhaps

justly offended if I even appeared to recollect them, and in my mother's presence. There was no danger. They had never fallen in Mr. Thrale's way—of course.

But you make me an egotist, and force me to remember scenes and ideas I never dreamed of communicating. The less so, because finding my fortune of late circumscribed in a manner wholly new to me, no doubt remained of all celebrity following my lost power of entertaining company, giving parties, &c.; and my heart prepared to shut itself quite up, convinced there existed not a human creature who cared one atom for poor H. L. P. now she had no longer money to be robbed of. That disinterested kindness does exist, however, my treatment here at Bath evinces daily, and in six months will come — if things do but continue in their natural course—my restoration day. Meanwhile this odd prefatory collection of Biographical Anecdotes are at your service. The Essays I wrote when quite a girl — almost a child — must all be lost undoubtedly. The following Allegory is just as good as I could make it now, bating the grand fault of representing Imagination as a female character. This is glanced at in 221 and 222 of "British Synonymy," vol. i.; but I did myself injustice in calling it a translation, for such it really is not, or deserving to be called so.

IMAGINATION'S SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS, AN ALLEGORICAL TALE.—BY H. L. SALUSBURY, 1760.

STRUCK with his charms whom all admire,
Whose beauties colder bosoms fire,
Imagination ventured forth
In search of Happiness — her lover;
Nor fear'd the frowns of wit or worth,
No blame could on her choice be thrown,
When once the object's name was known.
To Love's gay temple first she flies,
And darts around her piercing eyes,
And is my hero here? she cries;
Perhaps he may, the god replies;
But freely search our groves around,
Nor think yourself confin'd;
His name our echoes all resound,
Perhaps his form you'll find.
The Nymph was pleas'd, her search renew'd;
Thro' each soft maze her love pursued,
Till as she ran with rapid force
Fair Delicacy check'd her course.
I never thought to see you here,
Without a veil too! Fye, my dear:
To seek your sweetheart! and is this
A likely seat for sober bliss?
Believe my words and quick recede,
No Happiness lives here—*Indeed.*

Imagination stood corrected,
Then swiftly from her presence flew;
And soon her wand'ring steps directed
T' Ambition's palace — now in view.
Fix'd on a rock of steep ascent
The glittering fabric stood:
The way was slippery as she went
And wet with human blood.
Her lover's form on high was plac'd
To tempt her steps along:
But when the phantom she embrac'd,
It vanish'd and was gone.
From hence with trembling haste she fled,
And to the realms of Riches sped:
Consumptive care, and dropsied pride,
And tinsel'd splendour here she spied;
Nor ought was wanting—more or less,
Save what she sought for—Happiness.

What has our heroine next to do?
Her journey she began to rue,
For why? No places now remain
To try her fortune in 'tis plain:
And yet this foolish luckless love
Would let her have no rest:
Tho' 'gainst it all she could she strove,
Still would it flutter in her breast.
Whilst thus she thought and would have spoke,
Sudden a voice the silence broke:

Come to my cot, despairing maid!
'Tis mine alone to give you aid:
Come to my cot and live with me,
In unreproved pleasures free.
Young Health that seeks the morning air,
With Temperance at her side, are there;
Meek Peace that loves the hermitage,
And Contemplation — hoary sage;
With me long time have deign'd to dwell,
And dignified my mossy cell.
If you such company can bear,
And will awhile inhabit there;
Nor more your search renew;
Your lover will no longer fly:
'Tis his to curb when we deny,
And fly when we pursue.
Imagination found her wise,
Nor scorn'd to own herself to blame,
But took fair Piety's advice—
Uncall'd the Lover came.

The article in "British Synonymy," before referred to, runs thus:

"FANCY, IMAGINATION.

"'Fancy, whose delusions vain
Sport themselves with human brain,
Rival thou of nature's pow'r!
Canst from thy exhaustless store

Bid a tide of sorrow flow,
And whelm the soul in deepest woe,
Or in the twinkling of an eye
Raise it to mirth and jollity.
Dreams and shadows by thee stand,
Taught to run at thy command,
And along the wanton air
Flit like empty gossamer.

MERRICK.'

"These elegant and airy substantives are not, as one might suspect, wholly synonymous. A well-instructed foreigner will soon discover that, though in poetry, there seems little distinction, yet when they both come to be talked of in a conversation circle, we do say that Milton has displayed a boundless *imagination* in his poem of 'Paradise Lost,' transporting us, as it were, into the very depths of eternity, while he describes the journey of Satan and the games of the fallen angels; but that Pope's 'Rape of the Lock' is a work of exquisite *fancy*, almost emulative of Shakspeare's creative powers, not servilely imitating him. An intelligent stranger will observe, too, that although we give sex very arbitrarily to personified qualities, yet he will commonly find *Fancy* feminine, *Imagination* masculine, I scarce know why. But

"'Save in this shadowy nook, this green resort,
Imagination holds *his* airy court,
Bright Fancy fans *him* with *her* painted wings,
And to *his* sight *her* varying pleasures brings.'

"The French do not stick to this rule: an allegorical tale of Mademoiselle Barnard begins thus:—

"'L'imagination amante du bonheur,
Sans cesse le desire, et sans cesse le rappelle, &c.'

"Our translator, following the original design, by making Imagination feminine, has spoiled the effect of the poem. It is likewise observable that, speaking physically, these words are by no means synonymous, nor can be used each for other without manifest impropriety."

INTRODUCTION TO PIOZZI.

[THE following fragments of autobiography (with one exception) are in the shape of notes to the printed volumes of correspondence between Dr. Johnson and herself. I print them as they occur, with the portions of the correspondence which respectively suggested them.

This history of her acquaintance with Piozzi is detailed in a note on the passage (quoted *antè*, p. 104) from one of Johnson's letters, in which he congratulates her on having "got Piozzi again."]

Dr. Johnson, mentioning dear Piozzi, has encouraged me to tell how and where our acquaintance began. I was at Brighthelmstone in August 1780, or thereabout, when the rioters at Bath had driven my sick husband and myself and Miss Thrale (Fanny Burney went home to her father) into Sussex for change of place. I had been in the sea early one morning, and was walking with my eldest daughter on the cliff, when, seeing Mr. Piozzi stand at the library door, I accosted him in Italian, and asked him if he would like to give that lady a lesson or two whilst at Brighton, that she might not be losing her time. He replied, coldly, that he was come thither himself merely to recover his voice, which he feared was

wholly lost; that he was composing some music, and lived in great retirement; so I took my leave, and we continued our walk, Miss Thrale regretting she had lost such an opportunity; but on our returning home the same day, Mr. Piozzi started out of the shop, begged my pardon for not knowing me before, protested his readiness to do anything to oblige *me*, and his concern for not being able to contribute to our amusement, but that I should command everything in his now limited power.

We parted, and at breakfast the post brought me a letter from the present Madame D'Arblaye, saying that her father's friend, Mr. Piozzi, was gone to Brighthelmstone, where she hoped we should meet, for though he had lost his voice, his musical powers were enchanting, and that I should find him a companion likely to lighten the burden of life to *me*, as he was *just a man to my natural taste*. This letter is existing now, and that was her expression. Mr. Thrale found his performance on the forte-piano so superior to everything then heard in England, and in short took such a fancy to his society, that we were seldom apart, except while Mr. Piozzi was studying to compose the six fine sonatas, that he dedicated to his favourite pupil, Miss Child, afterwards Lady Westmoreland. His voice strengthened by sea-bathing, but never recovered the astonishing powers he brought with him first from Italy. I fancied they would have returned when we went abroad together four years after, but they never did; and he was contented in future to delight, without surprising, his hearers, unless they had indeed taste

enough, to understand that unrivalled *manner* of singing, which he as tenor, and Pacchierotti as soprano, had completely to themselves.

Mr. Piozzi was the son of a gentleman of Brescia in Lombardy, who meant him for the Church and educated him accordingly; but he resisted the celibat, escaped from those who would have made him take the vows, and as his uncle said, "Ah, Gabrieli, thou wilt never get nearer the altar than the organ-loft," so it proved. He ran from the Venetian state to Milan, where Marchese D'Araciel proved his constant friend and protector, and encouraged him in his fancy for trying Paris and London, instead of being a burden to his parents, who had fourteen children, a limited income, and many pecuniary uneasinesses. Whilst *here*, his fame reached the Queen of France, who sent for him and Sacchini, the great opera composer, and it was when they came back loaded with presents, and honours, and emoluments, that Dr. Johnson congratulated me on having got Piozzi again. Sacchini returned and died at Paris, but Piozzi staid (till I drove him from me), notwithstanding all the offers of the Court of France, when I was living at Bath, "deserted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen."

DOMESTIC TRIALS.

Her letter written in Passion Week, 1783 ("Letters," vol. ii. p. 253) was in answer to one from Dr. Johnson, dwelling on his own ailments exclusively and complaining of neglect. He says:—"You can hardly think how bad I have been whilst you were in all your altitudes at the opera, and all the fine places, and thinking little of me." She replies:—"My health, my children, and my fortune, dear Sir, are fast coming to an end, I think—not so my sorrows. Harriet is dead, and Cicely is dying."

Her manuscript commentary on these passages is:—

"Dear Harriet died of measles, hooping-cough, and strumous swellings in the neck and throat, 1783. Lucy had fallen a sacrifice to the same train of evils; and Cecilia, now Mrs. Mostyn, had her health so shaken after the date of this letter, that it was with the utmost difficulty she recovered. Mr. Piozzi and I had made what we considered as our final parting in London about a month before, when I requested him to tame the newspapers by quitting England, and leave me to endure my debts, my distractions, and the bitter reproaches of my family *as I could*. He had given up all my letters, promises, &c., into Miss Thrale's hands (now Lady Keith). You laughed when I told you that his expression was: 'Take it to you your mamma, and make it of *her* a countess; it shall kill me, I know, but it

shall kill her too.' Miss Thrale took the papers, and turned her back on him, I remember. Well! Sir Lucas Pepys alone knew the true state of my heart. He pitied me, kept my secret inviolable, behaved like a brother to me, and told all the inquirers that I was very ill indeed, and that *he had advised Bath.*

"To Bath I went, and Piozzi prepared for his melancholy journey, having first lent me a thousand pounds, for which I remitted the interest to Italy, and our ladies said I had bought him off *with their money:* so the calumny outlived even our separation. He had not left London when I was summoned to attend the two little girls at Mrs. Ray's school, Russel House, Streatham; but I refused another painful interview, however earnestly my lover begged it. I breakfasted with Sir Lucas Pepys: told him my heroism, and never knew till Piozzi told me after he returned to England, that he had been sitting at a front window of some public-house on the road all that dreadful Saturday, to see my carriage pass backwards and forwards to where the children resided. Oh what moments! oh what moments! but I went back to Bath. We lived in Russel Street, where I found my three eldest daughters at their work and their drawings. I *think* they scarcely said 'How d'ye do? or how does Cecilia do?' and we went on together without either rough words or smooth ones. Dr. Staker, to whom Pepys had recommended the care of my health, cut his own throat, and Doctors Woodward (of the pretty house in Gay Street) and Dobson, from Liverpool, were our medical advisers.

"Doctor Johnson never came to look for me at Streatham, where I lodged during Cecy's danger; and I would not go into London for fear of encountering Piozzi's eyes somewhere. So I only stopped at Pepys' house for an hour, close to Hyde Park, and away to Bath again, where one curious thing befell me, and but one. You have heard of many severities shown me, now hear of one man like yourself. My maid came to me half-alarmed, half-pleasant somehow, and said: 'I have had a king's messenger sent to me, Madam; but here's the letter, and the man is gone again. I offered him money, but he had orders to take none.'

"The letter said: —

"'MADAM,—Let nothing add to your present pain, as no one surely deserves so much happiness. Your letter is gone safe; I transmitted the *amiable contents* to Mr. Piozzi, who will receive it in due time; but you should be careful not to send another packet unpaid for, unless you would direct it to me. Your signing no name, and dating, forced me to peruse every word of a letter in three languages which no one could so have written but Mrs. Thrale, to whom I wish all that such merit and virtue, &c. &c. &c.

"'JACKSON,

"'Comptroller of the Foreign Post Office.

"He had directed the letter to my maid!

"We left our cards with this gentleman as soon as we were married, of course, and he made us a fine

dinner and a grand entertainment, and I saw for the first time my kind friend and admirer, Mr. Jackson. Poor fellow! he soon died, but not till Mr. Piozzi had sung with his daughter, and given him all the pleasure he was capable of receiving in the last stage of life, and a miserable state of health."

SECOND MARRIAGE.

In Dr. Johnson's last letter to her (*antè*, p. 113), he says: "Prevail on Mr. Piozzi to settle in England." In reference to this advice she writes: —

Dr. Johnson's advice corresponded exactly with Mr. Piozzi's intentions. He was impatient to show Italy to me and *me* to the Italians, but never meant to forbear bringing his wife home again, and showing he had brought her. Well aware of the bustle his marriage made, it was his most earnest wish that every doubt of his honour and of my happiness should be dispelled; so that whilst our ladies and Madame D'Arblaye, that was Miss Burney, and Baretti, and all the low Italians of the Haymarket who hated my husband, were hatching stories how he had sold my jointure, had shut me up in a convent, &c., we made our journey to our residence in Italy as showy as we possibly could. All the English at every town partook of our hospitality; the inhabitants came flocking, nothing loth, and we sent presents to our beautiful daughters by every hand that would carry them. Miss Thrale was of age by now, and I left Miss Nicholson, the bishop's grand-daughter, whom they appeared to like exceedingly, *with them*, but she soon quitted her post on observing that they gave people to understand she was a cast mistress of dear Piozzi, who never saw her face out of their company, except once at a dinner visit.

But I have not told you our parting. That I resided at Bath, these letters are a proof; that my residence was a wretched one, needs no asserting. Insults at home, and spiteful expressions in every letter from the guardians, broke my spirits quite down; and letters from my grieving lover, when they *did* come, helped to render my life miserable. I meant not to call him home till all my debts were paid; and my uncle's widow, Lady Salusbury, had threatened to seize upon my Welsh estate if I did not repay *her* money, lent by Sir Thomas Salusbury to my father; money in effect which poor papa had borrowed to give *him* when he was a student at Cambridge, and your little friend just born. This debt, however, not having been cancelled, stood against me as heiress. I had been forced to borrow from the ladies; and Mr. Crutchley, when I signed my mortgage to them for 7000*l.*, said: "Now, Madam, call your daughters in and thank them; make them your best *curtsey*," (with a sneer) "for keeping you out of a gaol." He added 500*l.* or 800*l.* more, and I paid that off as alluded to *; but Doctor Johnson knew how I was distressed, and you see how even he had been writing!!

Will you wonder to hear how ill I was? After much silent suffering, Doctor Dobson, who felt for me even to tears, left me one evening in the slipper bath, and I suppose ran to Lady Keith, and spoke with some se-

* Dr. Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale, London, April 19th, 1784:—"I am sensible of the ease that your repayment of Mr. Crutcheley has given: you felt yourself *genée* by that debt: is there an English word for it?"

verity; for she came into the room with him, and said, "The doctor tells me, Madam, he must write to Mr. Piozzi about your health; will you be pleased to tell us where to find him?" "At Milan, my dear," was the faint reply, "with his friend, the Marquis d'Araciel (a Spanish grandee); *his* palace, Milan, is sufficient direction." "Milan!" exclaimed they all at once, for not one word had ever passed among us concerning him or his destination. "Milan!" So Doctor Dobson, I trust, took pen and ink, and the next day I was better. Miss Thrale declared her resolution to go to their own house at Brighthelmstone, and I entreated permission to attend them. Short journeys, change of air, &c., helped to revive me, and Miss Nicholson went with us to Stonehenge, Wilton, &c. in our way to Sussex, whence I returned to Bath to wait for Piozzi. He was here the eleventh day after he got Dobson's letter. In twenty-six more we were married in London by the Spanish ambassador's chaplain, and returned hither to be married by Mr. Morgan, of Bath, at St. James's Church, July 25, 1784.

Greenland, the solicitor my husband now employed, discovered 1600*l.* still due to me, which was paid on demand; and for the rest of the debt, Piozzi, laughing, said it would be discharged in three years at farthest. So it was; and I felt as much, I think, of astonishment as pleasure. From London we went immediately to Paris, Lyons, Turin, Genoa, and Milan; where, as the Travel Book tells you, we spent the winter, and where the Marquis of Araciel and his family paid me most

distinguished attention. There Mr. Parsons dined with us, I remember, and left me a copy of complimentary verses too long to insert here; but we met again the following summer at Florence, where we were living in a sort of literary coterie with Mr. and Mrs. Greathead, Mr. Merry, whom his friends called Della Crusca, and a most agreeable *et cetera* of English and Italians. We had designed giving a splendid dinner on our wedding-day to Lord Pembroke and the whole party, and Mr. Parsons presented me verses which will not be understood except I write out my own, that provoked them. He had written a hymn to Venus, so I said: —

While Venus inspires, and such verses you sing
As Prior might envy and praise;
While Merry can mount on the eagle's wide wing,
Or melt in the nightingale's lays:
On the beautiful banks of this classical stream
While Bertie can carelessly rove,
Dividing his hours, and varying his theme
With philosophy, friendship, and love;

In vain all the beauties of nature or art
To rouze my tranquillity tried;
Too often, said I, has this languishing heart
For the joys of celebrity sigh'd.
Now sooth'd by soft music's seducing delights,
With reciprocal tenderness blest;
No more will I pant for poetical flights,
Or let vanity rob me of rest.

The Slave and the Wrestlers, what are they to me?
From plots and contentions removed;
And Job with still less satisfaction I see,
When I think of the pains I have prov'd.
It was thus that I sought in oblivion to drown
Each thought from remembrance that flows:
Thus fancy was stagnant I honestly own,
But I called the stagnation repose.

Now, wak'd by my countrymen's voice once again
To enjoyment of pleasures long past;
Her powers elastic the soul shall regain,
And recall her original taste.
Like the loadstone that long lay conceal'd in the earth,
Among metals which glitter'd around;
Inactive her talents, and only call'd forth,
When the ore correspondent was found.

To these lines Mr. Parsons brought the following very flattering answer, which he repeated after dinner:—

"*To Mrs. Piozzi.*

"Tho' sooth'd by soft music's seducing delights,
And blest with reciprocal love;
These cannot impede your poetical flights,
For still friends to the Muses they prove.
Then sitting so gaily your table around,
Let us all with glad sympathy view
What joys in this fortunate union abound,
This union of wit and virtù.

"May the day that now sees you so mutually blest
In full confidence, love, and esteem,
Still return with increasing delight to your breast,
And be Hymen your favourite theme!
Nor fear that your fertile strong genius should fail,
Each thought of stagnation dispel;
The fame which so long has attended a *Thrale*,
A *Piozzi* alone shall excel.

"As the ore must for ever obedient be found
By the loadstone attracted along:
So in England you drew all the poets around,
By the magical force of your song:
The same power on Arno's fair side you retain;
Your talents with wonder we see:
And we hope from your converse those talents to gain,
Tho' like magnets—in smaller degree."

Now if I should live to add any more anecdotes of my life, or any more verses to amuse you, they would come best at the end of my Journey-Book; and if you will send it, perhaps I may add a leaf or two.—18th December, 1815.

RESIDENCE IN ITALY.

(A separate and detached manuscript.)

BEFORE we began our journey, my good husband bespoke a magnificent carriage capable of containing every possible accommodation, and begged me to take tea enough and books enough; but when looking over the last article he saw 'Diodati's Italian Bible, with Notes' (this was in 1784, I remember). 'Ah ciel!' he exclaimed, 'this will bring us into trouble. Be content, my dear creature, with an English Bible, and reflect that you are not travelling as you ought to be, like a Protestant lady of quality, but as the wife of a native, an acknowledged Papist, and one determined to remain so.' I replied, from my heart, that I desired to appear in his country in no other character than that of his wife; that I would preserve my religious opinions inviolate at Milan, as he did his at London; and that all would go on, to use his own phrase, *all' ottima perfezzione.* Observing an undertoned expression, however, saying, 'They shall teaze *quest' anima bella* as little as I can help,' my heart *felt* (though I changed the conversation) that my mind must prepare itself for controversy. The account of temptations he told me I should undergo of *another*

kind I drove from me with unaffected laughter, but perceived that *he* was best pleased when I replied to them with equally unaffected but more *serious* protestations of exclusive and unalterable love.

. . . . . .

He was right all the while. When we arrived at Milan, our abiding place, I perceived the men of quality and *bon ton* considered me as fair game to shoot their senseless attentions at; and my sometimes cold, sometimes indignant, reception of their odd complimentary addresses, was received at first with most unmerited displeasure, and in a short time with admiration no less undeserved. Conjugal fidelity being a thing they had no conception of, and each concluding I kept my favours for some one else, nothing undeceived them but my strictly adhered-to resolution of never suffering a *tête-à-tête* with any man whatever except my husband, and laughing with them in company, saying we inhabited a Casa Fidele, and should do honour to the residence.

The truth is, old Comte Fidele, a widower of seventy years old, said his house was too big for him (an invalid), and gave us up the winter side of his palace for a year, paying only 80*l*. My bed-chamber, twenty-seven feet long and eighteen feet high, was lighted by one immense window at the end, and looked over the naviglio to the beautiful mountains of Brianza. Out of *this* went a handsome square room where I received my company in common. Out of that we walked into a large dinner apartment, next to which was the servants' hall (as we should call it, but known in Italy by name of anti-

camera), where and from whence the servants answered the bell. Through this opened the best drawing-room, with two fire-places, two large glass lustres, four enormous windows with yellow damask curtains I am ashamed to say how long, but my maid always said they were eight yards from top to bottom. Her apartment opened through *this*; for all were passage rooms, and a small pair of stairs led to a lovely cold bath. I have not done yet. Behind my magnificent bed of white-watered tabby, and very clean, a door opened into a large light closet where I kept my books; and through that a commodious staircase led to Mr. Piozzi's bed-chamber, and a beautiful dressing-room or study, where he was supposed to receive company, people on business, &c. All this very well furnished indeed for four-score pounds a year!! A. D. 1784.

The showy valet was a Frenchman hired at Paris, the gaudy butler out of livery resembling nothing but a gold fish, had eighteen pence a day, and the man cook no less. One woman, besides my own English Abigail, formed our household; a word I should not have used, for they all walked home in the evening, after the wives and children, &c. had been brought into the kitchen almost *literally* to lick the plates. It seemed very odd, but I believe Mr. Piozzi paid everybody every night of his life. I remember his asking me one day what I thought our dinner came to; we were eight at table, the dishes seven and nine. When I had made some ridiculous conjectures, he showed me that the whole expense, wine included, was thirteen shillings of our money, no more, and I expected to hear

him say how happy he was. Not a bit; he was happy only in my attachment and society; his countrymen were his scourge. They told him, as I was a Protestant I was of course an infidel, and should be a favourite at the German court which the Emperor kept at Milan. So I was; but one day when some of our Italian ecclesiastics dined with us and met the Austrian Count Kinigh, the Viennese librarian, &c., who endeavoured to play upon the natives, ridiculing their superstitions, &c., I could bear no more of what they called philosophy, the less perhaps because they hoped I should be pleased with such discourse, and much amazed our Milanese friends by saying, when applied to, that I really thought the thorns of ancient philosophy were now only fit to burn in the fire, unless we could make a hedge of them to fence in the possession of Christian truth.

This speech won all the old abates' hearts at once, and was echoed about with ten times the praise it deserved. I was now assailed on every side to become a Romanist, for *Catholics* I never would submit to call *them* who excluded from salvation every sect of our religion but their own. Dear Piozzi grew more and more weary of this controversial chat; but it was comical to see with how much pleasure he witnessed my gaining even a momentary triumph over these men, skilled in disputation and masters of their own language. "Are you a Calvinist, Madam?" said one of the Monsignori. "Certainly *not*," was the reply. "Do you kneel to receive the Sacrament?" "*I do.*" "And are not those

fellows damned who do receive it standing or sitting?" "I believe *not*," said I. "Our blessed Lord did not himself eat the passover according to the strict rules of the Mosaical law, which insists on its being eaten *standing*; whereas we know that Jesus Christ reclined on a triclinium, as was the usage of Rome and of *the times*. Nay, perhaps he was pleased to do so, that such disputes should not arise; or if arising, that his example might be appealed to." "What proof have you of our Saviour's reclining on a triclinium?" "St. John's leaning on his breast at supper," said I. "Oh, that was at common meals, not at the passover." "Excuse me, my lord, it was at the *last* solemn supper, which we all commemorate with our best intentions, some one way, some another. *Their* method is not yours, neither is it *mine;* let us beware of judging, lest we ourselves be judged." "Fetch me a Bible, Sir," said Monsignore. "I will bring mine," said I. "Excuse *me* now, Madam," replied my antagonist; "we cannot abide but by the Vulgate." Canonico Palazzi offered to go; I begged of him to buy me one at the next bookseller's three doors off. My victory was complete, and I have the *Bible still* which won it for me.

All this, however delightful, grew *very* wearisome and a *little* dangerous; and we were glad when spring-time came, that we might set out upon our travels.

. . . . . .

Every new comer from that country (England) told us how all ill-reports had subsided, how the Cardinal Prince d'Orini's civilities had been related up and down, and in short that we had but to return, secure of every

comfort Great Britain could afford. Mr. Piozzi said, the moment every debt should be discharged, that he would turn his horses' heads towards the island he had always preferred to every other place; and, so saying, we travelled on, as happy in leaving Milan as in arriving there. *Au reste*, as the French say, few things befell us worth recording, except Count Manucci's visit. He had been intimate with Mr. Thrale in England, as Johnson's letters abundantly testify, and had taken a fancy to Mr. Piozzi at Paris, when he was there with Sacchini. Hearing, therefore, of his marriage, he came one morning, but never had a notion that it was with *me* he had connected himself. 'Ah, Madame!' exclaimed the Count, 'quel coûp de Théâtre!' when the door opened, and showed him an old acquaintance with a new name. This was the nobleman who, I told you, lamented so tenderly that his sister's children were *counterfeited*.

We return to the Biographical Anecdotes.

The letters from our daughters had been cold and unfrequent during the whole absence; a little more so as we approached nearer home. The newspapers had told of our exploits at Brussels, and public good-humour seemed disposed to wait and even to meet our return. Fector, the government officer at Dover, would not even *look* into our portmanteaus, trunks, &c.; and I saw instantly that the tide was turned. Numberless cards were left at the Royal Hotel, where we remained till a house in Hanover Square was fitted up to receive us, and on the 22nd of May, we opened with a concert

and supper, the more willingly, as Mr. Cator, in whose hands we placed our pecuniary affairs at starting, pronounced the mortgage paid off, and 1500*l.* in the bank to begin with. This Mr. Cator *had* been one of our insulting enemies; was acting executor to Mr. Thrale and guardian to his daughters; *had* said, that I should be soon deceased, but my death would be concealed by Mr. Piozzi, while he enjoyed my jointure, &c.; *this* man's approbation was indeed a triumph, and we now intended to be happy.

Cecilia had been left at Ray and Frey's school at Streatham, with friends I could depend on; but Lady Keith removed her thence and placed her at Stevenson's, Queen's Square, without my knowledge or consent. We kept our distance then, and so did they; meeting only in public. I took my little mad-headed Cecilia home, and we had masters to her, &c. Nor do I know when the sisters and I should have met again, had not *she* grown so fast that at fourteen years old or six months more, Mr. Piozzi felt himself alarmed, and was advised by our friends, Lord Huntingdon, Sir Charles Hotham, and the Greatheads, with whom we lived familiarly, to put the young lady into Chancery, a measure he was most earnest to adopt. We were at Streatham Park, but I observed my husband unusually anxious, when an old Mr. Jones who had married Sir William Fowler's daughter, my mother's first cousin, told me that the Miss Thrales had made overtures of reconciliation through *him* (who lived much with us), and that he should make a breakfast party for

us all at his house in Cavendish Square, with my permission. It was the middle of the French Revolution, so there was talk enough, and the day went on very well, with an invitation to the ladies for Easter Tuesday, I remember; and Pisani, the Venetian ambassador, Lord and Lady Coventry, and 130 people, in short, witnessed our gaiety and mutual good-humour. Three weeks more, however, had scarce elapsed before Miss Thrale, now Viscountess Keith, came down on horseback, and said she must speak to us on *business*. It was to beg Mr. Piozzi would *not* put Cecilia into Chancery. Their fortunes, they alleged, would be examined by lawyers, and *dear* Mr. Cator's accounts too would be hauled over, with which *they* were well contented; alluding, besides this, to some undisclosed dealings and connexions of their father's, wholly *new* and very surprising to *me*, who had no notion of his affairs beyond the counting-house and brewhouse yard. In short, they frighted us into every compliance they could wish, then kept their distance as before, sending perpetually for Cecy.

Libels and odd ill-natured speeches appeared sometimes in the public prints, and one day of the ensuing winter, when I was airing my lap-dogs in a retired part of Hyde Park, Lord Fife came up to me, and after a moment's chat, said, "Would you like to know your friends from your enemies?" in a Scotch accent. "Yes, very much, my lord," was the reply. "Ay, but have you strength of mind enough to bear my intelligence?" "Make haste and tell me, dear my lord," said I. "Why

then the Burneys are your enemies, that so fostered and fondled; more than that, Baretti has been making up a libel . . . . . and every magazine has refused it entrance except a new work carried on by the female Burneys." "Never mind," replied I, "nobody will read their work; I feel as I ought towards your lordship's friendship, which you cannot prove better than by not naming the subject; it will die away, so will the authors; good morrow, and a thousand thanks." . . . My own books came out one by one: *they* pleased, and I suffered not these tormentors much to vex me. We went on spending our money at and *upon* Streatham Park, till old Mr. Jones and the wise Marquis Trotti advised Piozzi to make the tour of North Wales, and see *my* country, *my* estate, &c. We had been all over Scotland, except the Highlands, where we were afraid of carrying Cecy because of her unsteady health. I staid with dear Mrs. Siddons, at Rose Hill, while our friends made their ramble, and came back as much delighted with Denbighshire and Flintshire as Mr. Thrale had been disgusted with them. This was charming. Piozzi had fixed upon a spot, and resolved to build an Italian villa on the banks of the Clwydd. Even Mr. Murphy applauded the project, and we drew in our expenses, preparing to engage in brick and mortar.

. . . . . .

Gout now fastened on Mr. Piozzi, who built his pretty villa in North Wales, and conforming to our religious opinions, kindly set our little church at Dymerchion in a state it never before enjoyed, spending sums of

money on its decoration, and making a vault for my ancestors and for ourselves to repose in. I wrote verses for the opening of our tiny temple, and dear Piozzi set them most enchantingly to music; our clerk, he said, was a very good genius; and I trust a more virtuous or pious pleasure could not be felt than ours when teaching those poor people to sing the lines you will read over leaf.

With homely verse and artless lays,
Full oft these humble roofs shall ring;
Whilst to our dear Redeemer's praise
Rough youths and village maidens sing.

Incarnate God! when He appear'd,
And blessings all around him spread,
Though still by radiant myriads fear'd,
He chose the poor, the lowly shed.

And sure before He comes again
In awful state to judge the world;
Resounding choirs though He disdain,
Temples and tow'rs in ruin hurl'd;

To unambitious efforts kind,
Pleas'd He permits our rustic lays;
Our simple voices, unrefin'd,
Have leave to sing their Saviour's praise.

The house, our dwelling-house I mean, was built from a design of its elegant master's own hand, and he

set poor old Bachygraig up too; repaired and beautified it, and to please his silly wife, gilt the Llewenny lion on its top. The scroll once held in his paw was broke and gone. Lombardy, where his (Mr. Piozzi's) relations lived, was torn by faction, and his father, a feeble old man of eighty-one years old, equal to one hundred in our island, was actually terrified into apoplexy, lethargy, and death. His son, who half entertained a tender thought that they might meet once more, grieved for his loss severely, the more so, as he himself said, because 'Sarà quel che sarà, ma alla fin, il sangue non e acqua.' His brother, I am afraid, joined the Republicans, leaving a very deserving lady, born at Venice, whose friends were wholly ruined, though her uncle, the Abbate Zendrini, was afterwards in high favour, and even appointed confessor to Buonaparte. They had baptized one of their babies by name of John Salusbury in compliment to me, and Mr. Piozzi sent to bring him out of the confusion. He came an infant between three and four years old. We educated him first at Mr. Davis's school at Streatham, where my own son had been placed so many years before, and then with Mr. Shephard, of Enborne, Berkshire, whence he commonly came to us at Streatham Park, or Bath, or Brynbella.

You know the rest. You know that dear Mr. Piozzi died of the gout at his pretty villa in North Wales. You know that he left me *that*, and everything else, never naming his nephew in the will, only leaving among his father's children 6000*l.* in the three per cents., being the whole of his savings during the twenty-five years he

had shared and enjoyed my fortune. Unexampled generosity indeed! And true love! Could I do less than repay it to the child whose situation in life I now felt responsible for! I bred him with his friends at Oxford, yet he stood alone, *insulated* in a nation where he had no natural friend. Incapacitated to return where his religion would have rendered him miserable, and petted, and spoiled, till any profession would have been painful. What could I do? The boy had besides all this formed an attachment to his friend's sister. What could I do? You know what I *did* do. I gave them my estate; and resolving that Mr. Thrale's daughters should suffer as little as possible by this arrangement, I repaired and new fronted their house at Streatham Park, and by the enormous expense incurred *there*, and the loss of my rents from Denbighshire and Flintshire, reduced myself to the very wretched state *you found* me in, and lavished upon me a friendship, which, at the sauciest hour of my life, would by *my* mind have been esteemed an honour, but in this sad deserted stage of it the *truest*, very near *the only cordial*. *Thus* then, as Adam says to Raphael in Milton's "Paradise Lost":—

> "*Thus* have I told thee all my state; and brought
> *My* story to that sum of earthly bliss
> Which *I* enjoy; and since at length to *part*,
> *Go*; sent of heaven, angelic messenger,
> Gentle to *me*, and affable hath been
> Thy conversation, to be honour'd ever
> With grateful memory,"

by H. L. Piozzi.

THRALE'S WILL.—SALE OF THE BREWERY.

"We read the will to-day." — *Johnson to Mrs. Thrale*, April 5, 1781.

It was neither kind or civil, you will say, to open the will in my absence, but Mr. Thrale had been both civil and kind in labouring to restore to me the Welsh estate, which I had meant to give him in our moments of uneasiness when I became possessed of it by Sir Thomas Salusbury's death, from whom we had once expected Offley Place in Hertfordshire, and all its wide domain. Notwithstanding that disappointment, my husband left me the interest of 50,000*l.* for my life, doubtless in return for my diligence during our distresses in 1772, because it is specified to be given over and above what was provided in our marriage settlement. He left me also the plate, pictures, and linen of both houses, forgetting even to name Brighthelmstone, so all I had bought for *that* place fell to the ladies (who said loudly what a wretched match their *poor* papa had made). It was not so, however. Mr. Thrale had received the rents and profits from Wales, 9000*l.*, and had cut timber for 4000*l.* more. My mother and my aunts, and an old Doctor Bernard Wilson, had left me 5000*l.* among them, more or less, and I carried 10,000*l.* in my hand, so that the family was benefited by me 28,000*l.*

at the lowest, besides having been, as King Richard expresses it,

"A jack-horse in their great affairs."

On Mr. Thrale's death I kept the counting-house from nine o'clock every morning till five o'clock every evening till June, when God Almighty sent us a knot of rich Quakers who bought the whole, and saved me and my coadjutors from brewing ourselves into another bankruptcy, which hardly could, I think, have been avoided being, as we were five in number, Cator, Crutchley, Johnson, myself, and Mr. Smith, all with equal power, yet all incapable of using it without help from Mr. Perkins, who wished to force himself into partnership, though hating the whole lot of us, save only *me*. Upon my promise, however, that if he would find us a purchaser, I would present his wife with my dwelling-house at the Borough, and all its furniture, he soon brought forward these Quaker Barclays, from Pennsylvania I believe they came,—her own relations I have heard—and they obtained the brewhouse a prodigious bargain, but Miss Thrale was of my mind to part with it for 150,000*l.*; and I am sure I never did repent it, as certainly it was best for us five females at the time, although the place has now doubled its value, and although men have almost always spirit to spend, while women show greater resolution to spare.

Will it surprise you now to hear that, among all my fellow executors, *none* but Johnson opposed selling the concern? Cator, a rich timber merchant, was afraid of implicating his own credit as a commercial man.

Crutchley hated Perkins, and lived upon the verge of a quarrel with him every day while they acted together. Smith cursed the whole business, and wondered what his relation, Mr. Thrale, could mean by leaving him 200*l.* he said, and such a burden on his back to bear for it. All were well pleased to find themselves secured, and the brewhouse *decently*, though not *very*, advantageously disposed of, except dear Doctor Johnson, who found some odd delight in signing drafts for hundreds and for thousands, to him a new, and as it appeared delightful, occupation. When all was nearly over, however, I cured his honest heart of its incipient passion for trade, by letting him into *some*, and *only* some, of its mysteries. The plant, as it is called, was sold, and I gave God thanks upon Whit Sunday, 1781, for sparing me farther perplexity, though at the cost of a good house, &c.

THE CHARMING S.S.

"So you may set the Streatfield at defiance."—*Johnson*, Oct. 15, 1778; *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 20.

My dear and ever honoured Doctor Collier was the cause of my making this Miss Streatfield's acquaintance. I had learned from others that he dropped into her hands soon as dismissed from mine; and that he gained rather than lost by the exchange, had long been my secret consolation. She was but fourteen or fifteen when they first met, and he was growing sickly. She did her own way, and her way was to wait on *him*, who instructed her in Greek, and who obtained from her excess of tenderness for him, what I could not have bestowed. I have heard her say she grudged his old valet the happiness of reaching him a glass of wine, and out of her house did he never more make his residence, but died in her arms, and was buried at her expense, the moment she came of age.* All these

* The attachment inspired by Dr. Collier in both his pupils resembles that of Stella and Vanessa for Swift, the growth of which is described in the Dean's best poem, "Cadnus and Vanessa":—

> "I knew by what you said and writ
> How dang'rous things were men of wit:
> You caution'd me against their charms,
> But never gave me equal arms.
> Your lessons found the weakest part,
> Aim'd at the head, but reach'd the heart."

accounts did I never cease listening to, till I observed my beautiful friend, not contented with her legitimate succession to the heart of Doctor Collier, was endeavouring to supplant me in the esteem of Mr. Thrale, whose good opinion, assailed vainly by Baretti, it was my business and my bounden duty to retain. Miss Thrale, now Lady Keith, was in *this* case my coadjutor; though she had acted in concert with Baretti, she abhorred this attack of Miss Streatfield, who was very dangerous indeed, both from her beauty and learning. Wit she possessed none of, and was as ignorant as an infant of

"That which before us lies in daily life."

No wonder Mr. Thrale, whose *mind* wanted some new object, since he had lost his son, and lost beside the pleasure he had taken in his business, before all knowledge of it was shared with *myself*,—no wonder that he encouraged a sentimental attachment to Sophia Streatfield, who became daily more and more dear to him, and almost necessary. No one who visited us missed seeing his preference of her to me; but she was so amiable and so sweet natured, no one appeared to blame him for the unusual and unrepressed delight he took in her agreeable society. I was exceedingly oppressed by pregnancy, and saw clearly my successor in the fair S. S. as we familiarly called her in the family, of which she now made constantly a part, and stood godmother to my new-born baby, by bringing which I only helped to destroy my own health, and disappoint

my husband, who wanted a son. "Why Mr. Thrale is Peregrinus Domi," said Dr. Johnson; "he lives in Clifford Street, I hear, all winter;" and so he did, leaving his carriage at his sister's door in Hanover Square, that no inquirer might hurt his favourite's reputation; which my behaviour likewise tended to preserve from injury, and we lived on together as well as we could. Miss Browne, who sung enchantingly, and had been much abroad; Miss Burney, whose powers of amusement were many and various, were *my* companions then at Streatham Park, with Doctor Johnson, who wanted me to be living at the Borough, because less inconvenient to *him*, so he said I passed my winter in Surrey, "feeding my chickens and starving my understanding:" but 1779, and the summer of it was coming, to bring on us a much more serious calamity.

THRALE'S ILLNESS.

"YOUR account of Mr. Thrale's illness is very terrible." —*Johnson*, June 14, 1770; *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 47.

My account of Mr. Thrale's illness had every reason to be terrible. He had slept at Streatham Park, and left it after breakfast, looking as usual.

His sister's husband, Mr. Nesbitt, often mentioned in these Letters and Memoirs, had been dead perhaps a fortnight. *He* was commercially connected, I knew, with Sir George Colebrook and Sir Something Turner; but that was all I knew — and that was nothing. I knew of nothing between Thrale and them, till *after my return from Italy*, and was the more perhaps shocked and amazed when, sitting after dinner with Lady Keith and Doctor Burney and his daughter, I believe, my servant Sam opened the drawing-room door with *un air effaré*, saying: "My master is come home, but there is something amiss." I started up, and saw a tall black female figure, who cried, "Don't go into the library, don't go in I say." My rushing by her somewhat rudely was all her prohibition gained: but there sate Mrs. Nesbitt holding her brother's hand, who I perceived knew not a syllable of what was passing. So I called Dr. Burney, begged

him to fly in the post-chaise, which was then waiting for him, and send me some physician, Sir R. Jebb or Pepys, or if none else could be found, my old accoucheur, Doctor Bromfield of Gerard Street. 'Twas *he* that came; and, convincing me it was an apoplectic seizure, acted accordingly, while the silly ladies went home quite contented I believe: only Mrs. Nesbitt said she thought he was *delirious;* and from her companion I learned that he had dined at their house, had seen the will opened, and had dropped as if lifeless from the dinner-table; when, instead of calling help, they called their carriage, and brought him five or six miles out of town in that condition. Would it not much enrage one? From this dreadful situation medical art relieved Mr. Thrale, but the natural disposition to conviviality degenerated into a preternatural desire for food, like Erisicthon of old

"Cibus omnis in illo
Causa cibi est; semperque locus inanis edendo."

It was a distressing moment, and the distress increasing perpetually, nor could any one persuade our patient to believe, or at least to *acknowledge,* he ever had been ill. With a *person,* the very wretched wreck of what it had been, no one could keep him at home. Dinners and company engrossed all his thoughts, and dear Dr. Johnson encouraged him in them, that *he* might not appear *wise,* or predicting his friend's certainly accelerated dissolution.

Death of the baby *boy* I carried in my bosom, was

the natural consequence of the scene described here; but I continued to carry him till a quarrel among the clerks, which I was called to pacify, made a complete finish of the *child* and nearly of me. The men were reconciled though, and my danger accelerated their reconcilement.

DEATH OF THRALE.

"It was by bleeding till he fainted that his life was saved." — *Johnson*, Aug. 24, 1780; *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 185.

Here is another allusion to that famous bleeding which certainly in Southwark did save the life of Mr. Thrale, and by its *immediate effects* ruined my nerves for ever.

Sir Richard however said: "We have paid his heavy debt this time, but he must eat prudently in future." No one however could control his appetite, which Sir Lucas Pepys, who was at Brighthelmstone, observing, commanded us to town, and took a house not 100 yards from his own for us, in Grosvenor Square, and I went every day to the Borough, whence Lancaster, a favourite clerk third in command, was run away with 1850*l.* Thither poor Dr. Delap followed me, begging a prologue to his new play, and I remember composing it in the coach, as I was driving up and down after Lancaster: but my business in Southwark was of far severer import.

Some fellow had incited our master to begin a new and expensive building to the amount of 20,000*l.*, after the progress of which he was ever inquisitive, and kept the plan of it in his bedchamber. So little did Dr.

Johnson even *then* comprehend the strict awe I stood in of my first husband, that I well recollect his saying to me, "Madam! You should tear that foolish paper down: why 'tis like leaving a wench's loveletter in the apartments of a man whom you would wish to cure of his amorous passion." God knows I durst as well encounter death as disturb Mr. Thrale's loveletters or his building plans. The next grand agony was seeing him send out cards of invitation to a concert and supper on the 5th of April. He had himself charged Piozzi, who was the first to tell me, with care of the musical part of our entertainment, and had himself engaged the Parsees, a set of Orientals, who were shown at all the gay houses, —the lions of the day. I could but call my coadjutors, Jebb and Pepys; who tried to counteract this frolic, but in vain. They were obliged to compromise the matter by making him promise to leave town for Streatham immediately after the 5th. "Leave London! lose my Ranelagh season!" exclaimed their patient. "Why Sir, we wished you to be here, that our attendance might be more regular, and less expensive: but since we find you thus unmanageable, you are safest at a distance." *Now*, Johnson first began to see, or *say* he saw the danger, but *now* his lectures upon temperance came all too late. Poor Mr. Thrale answered him only by inquiring when lamprey season would come in? requesting Sir Philip, who was dining with us, to write his brother, the Prebendary of Worcester, a letter, begging from *him* the first fish of that kind the Severn should produce. I winked at Sir Philip, but he, following us women half

up stairs, said: "I understand you, Madam, but *must* disobey. A friend I have known thirty-six years shall not ask a favour of me in his last stage of life and be refused. What difference can it make?" Tears stood in *his* eyes, and my own prevented all answer. In effect, that day was Mr. Thrale's last! I saw him in Sir Richard's arms at midnight. Pepys came at ten, and never left the house till early light showed me the way to Streatham: and from thence, hoping still less disturbance, to Brighthelmstone: where we had a dwelling house of our own, and whither you will see the letters all addressed.

This was thirty-four or thirty-five years ago, yet did I never completely recover my strength of body or of mind again. I am sure I never did! The shocks of 1780 and 1781 are not *yet* either recovered or forgotten by poor H. L. P.

DR. COLLIER.

"Poor dear Dr. Collier."—*Letters*, vol. ii. p. 183.

Perhaps this is no improper place to observe that La Bruyère tells his readers with confidence how the firmest friendships will be always dissolved by the intervention of love seizing the heart of either party.* It may be so: but certainly the sentiment with which dear Dr. Collier inspired me in 1757 remains unaltered now in the year 1815. After my father's death my kind and prudent mother, resolving I should marry Mr. Thrale, and fearing possibly lest my Preceptor should foment any disinclination which she well knew would melt in her influence, or die in her displeasure, resolved to part us, and we met no more: but never have I failed remembering *him* with a preference as completely distinct from the venerating solicitude which hung heavily over my whole soul whilst connected with Doctor Johnson, as it was from the strong connubial duty that tied my every thought to Mr. Thrale's interest, or from the fervid and attractive passion which made twenty years passed in Piozzi's enchanting society seem like a happy dream of twenty hours. My first friend formed my mind to resemble *his*. It never *did* resemble that of

* "No friend like to a woman man discovers,
So that they have not been, nor may be, lovers."
BYRON.

either of my husbands, and in that of Doctor Johnson's mine was swallowed up and lost. Oh true were these words, put together so long ago :—

> "The sentiment I feel for you
> No pow'r on earth shall e'er subdue;
> No pow'r on earth shall e'er remove,
> Nor pungent grief nor ardent love."

Sophia Streatfield too, if yet living, will bear testimony to the strange power of Doctor Arthur Collier over the minds of his youthful pupils when past seventy years old, and to the day of his *death*, which when I knew her, she lamented annually, by wearing a black dress, &c. If he did not burn my letters, Latin exercises, &c., she possesses them.

Mr. Thrale's passion for *her* she played with; a little perhaps diverting herself by mortifying *me*, but there was no harm done, I am confident. He thought her a thing at least semi-celestial; had he once found her out a mere mortal woman, his flame would have blazed out no more. And it *did* blaze frightfully indeed during one dreadful attack of the apoplexy at our Borough house, alluded to in these letters, page 178, when by Sir Richard Jebb's conditional permission, Shaw the apothecary bled Mr. Thrale *usque ad deliquium*, and I thought all over. When, however, temporary and apparent recovery followed the horrid process of stimulating cataplasms which awakened him from carus to delirium, that delirium only appeased by bleeding quite to faintness; when he had remained mute five long days; not speaking a consolatory word

to one of us: friends, sisters, daughters, clerks, physicians, — no sooner was Sophy Streatfield's voice heard in Southwark, than our patient sate up in bed, conversed with *her* without hesitation, and even said, with a complimentary smile, kissing her hand, that the visit she had made that day, had repaid all his sufferings. It was from this attack, when he recovered, that Lawrence, Jebb, &c. sent us to Bath, whence rioters dislodged and drove us to Brighthelmstone. From thence we returned to London: a ready-furnished house in Grosvenor Square being thought the best place by medical advisers, while Perkins assured Doctor Johnson that his master would be *safest*, in every respect, at a *distance* from his *business*.

MINOR MARGINAL NOTES ON THE TWO VOLUMES OF PRINTED LETTERS.*

Mr. Seward. — Mr. Seward, who wrote the "Anecdotes:" he was only son to a rich brewer, whom he disappointed and grieved by his preference of literature to riches. His head, however, was not quite right. I believe his principles were vitiated by his studies among the Swiss infidels: Helvetius, D'Alembert, and the rest of them. He kept his morality pure for the sake of his health perhaps, for he was a professed valetudinarian.

Mr. Keep.—Mr. Keep, when he heard I was a native of North Wales, told me that *his* wife was a Welsh woman, and desired to be buried at Ruthyn: "So," says the man, "I went with the corpse myself, because I thought it would be a *pleasant journey*, and indeed I found Ruthyn a very beautiful place."

Sir Robert Chambers. — The box goes to Calcutta to Sir Robert Chambers, a favourite with them all. (I never could see why.) He was judge in India, married Fanny Wilton the statuary's daughter, who stood for Hebe at the Royal Academy. She was very beautiful indeed, and but fifteen years old when Sir Robert married her. His portrait is in the library at Streatham Park. 1815.

* The name, or passage, suggesting the note is given when required for its elucidation.

Bath is often mentioned in these letters, but I forgot among the baby anecdotes which precede them, to say how I remembered being carried about the rooms by Beau Nash, and taken notice of by Lady Caroline, mother to the famous Charles James Fox.

On Johnson's writing to congratulate her on making the conquest of the Prince of Castiglione, she writes: "The man who drank his health by name of Mr. Vagabond."

Whitbread. — Would you for the other thousand have my master such a man as Whitbread? Father to the man who killed himself. He asked me to marry him after Mr. Thrale's death, when his fortune was much increased: on my refusal (he had three children) Lady Mary Cornwallis accepted his hand, and brought him a daughter before she died.

"But I long to see 20,000*l.* in the bank."—*Johnson.*

Ay so did I, but not one shilling was found by the executors in *any* place, except a trifle for present use at the banker's shop; 6,000*l.*, no *more:* and no estate purchased anywhere. Although Murphy said afterwards that Mr. T. enjoyed a contract, bringing in 26,000*l.* a-year for three years, of which neither Dr. Johnson nor I, nor Perkins the head clerk, ever heard. I now *know* that to *be true,* but have not known it fifteen years. Mr. Murphy himself witnessed the deed, the contract. Very strange!

"Why should you suspect me of forgetting lilly lolly?"—*Johnson.*

Ask me about this stuff, and I'll try to tell you: come, here it is. One of our Welsh squires had a half-witted son, — his sole heir, poor fellow! and the parents fondled it accordingly. When Christmas came, and all the country was invited at Llewenney Hall, the seat of my mother's *eldest* brother, who married Lady Elizabeth Tollemache, came these dear Wynnes and their booby boy about eleven years old. "What does the child say?" cries my aunt, "it sounds like lilly lolly." "Indeed, my Lady Betty," replies the mother, in a sharp Welsh accent, "Dick does *say* lilly lolly, sure enough: but he *mains*: How do you do, Sir Robert Cotton?" I had probably in some unprinted letter said: "Here's a deal of lilly lolly, which I suppose you forget, but *it means* How do you do, Dr. Johnson?"

Foote.—"Did you see Foote at Brighthelmstone? — Did you think he would so soon be gone? — Life, says Falstaff, is a shuttle. He was a fine fellow in his way; and the world is really impoverished by his sinking glories. Murphy ought to write his life, at least to give the world a Footeana. Now, will any of his contemporaries bewail him? Will Genius change *his sex* to weep? I would really have his life written with diligence."* — *Johnson.*

Doctor Johnson was not aware that Foote broke his

* A very able essay on the "Life and Character of Foote" has been written by Mr. Forster, who clears his memory of the calumny which shortened his life.

heart because of a hideous detection; he was trying to run away from England, and from infamy, but death stopped him. Doctor Johnson never could persuade himself that things were as bad as the sufferer or his friends represented them; he thought it *wrong* to believe so, and steadily made the best *on't*.

Richardson.—"Doctor Johnson said, that if Mr. Richardson had lived till *I* came out, my praises would have added two or three years to his life: 'For,' says Dr. Johnson, 'that fellow died merely for want of change among his flatterers: he perished for want of *more*, like a man obliged to breathe the same air till it is exhausted.'"

"Here is Mr. ——, now Sir William, however, who talks all about taste, and classics, and country customs, and rural sports, with rapture, which he perhaps fancies unaffected—was riding by our chaise on the Downs yesterday, and said, because the sun shone, that one could not perceive it was autumn; 'for,' says he, 'there is not one tree in sight to show us the fall of the leaf; and hark! how that sweet bird sings,' continued he, 'just like the first week in May.' 'No, no,' replied I, 'that's nothing but a poor robin-redbreast, whose chill wintry note tells the season too plainly, without assistance from the vegetable kingdom.' 'Why, you amaze me,' quoth our friend, 'I had no notion of *that*.' Yet Mrs. —— says, this man is a natural converser, and Mrs. —— is an honourable lady." — *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 33.

The blanks are filled up with the names of Pepys and Montagu.

The Burneys. — Doctor Burney and his family are often spoken of in these Memoirs. He was a man of very uncommon attainments: wit born with him, I suppose; learning, he had helped himself to, and was proud of the possession; elegance of manners he had so cultivated, that those who knew but little of the *man*, fancied he had great flexibility of mind. It was mere pliancy of body, however, and a perpetual show of obsequiousness by bowing incessantly as if *acknowledging* an inferiority, which nothing would have forced him to *confess*. I never in my life heard Johnson pronounce the words, "I beg your pardon, Sir," to any human creature but the apparently soft and gentle Dr. Burney. Perhaps the story may be related in the "Anecdotes:" but as I *now* recollect it, thus it is. "Did you, Madam, subscribe 100*l.* to build our new bridge at Shrewsbury?" said Burney to me. "No, surely, Sir," was my reply. "What connexion have I with Shropshire? and where should I have money so to fling away?" "It is very *comical*, is it not, Sir?" said I, turning to Dr. Johnson, "that people should tell such unfounded stories?" "It is," answered he, "neither *comical* nor serious, my dear; it is only a wandering lie." This was spoken in his natural voice, without a thought of offence, I am confident; but up bounced Burney in a towering passion, and to my much amaze, put on the hero, surprising Doctor Johnson into a sudden request for pardon, and protestation of not

having ever intended to accuse his friend of a falsehood. The following lines written, *sur le champ*, with a gold pen I gave him, prove he could make more agreeable *impromptus* than this I have related:—

"Such implements, tho' fine and splendid,
They say can ne'er *write well:*
With common fame that truth is blended,
Let this example tell.

"If bounteous Thrale could thus confer
Her learning, sense, and wit;
Who would not wish a gift from her,
Who—not to beg—submit?

"Paupers from Grub Street at her gate
Would crowd both young and old,
In humble guise to supplicate
For thoughts—not pens of gold.

"For not alone the gift of tongues,
The Muses' grace and favour:
Adorn her prose, and on her songs
Bestow the Attic flavour.

"The Virtues all around her wait
T' infuse their influence mild;
And every duty regulate
Of parent, wife, and child.

"Such judgment to direct each storm,
Each hurricane to weather;
A mind so pure, a heart so warm,
How seldom found together!"

There was a merry tale told about the town of some musical nobleman having been refused tickets for his private concert about this time by blind Stanley, who he had always patronised: and of his going to a grave friend's, I forget who, where, foaming with anger, he at length exclaimed: "But I will go to Burney's house to-night (where there was music), and that will *do* for him." "Are you mad, my dear Lord?" says the grave man amazed: "to talk of setting a blind man's house on fire, because he has refused your favourite girl a ticket? Fie! fie! I am ashamed of listening to such strange things." The *équivoque* was now well understood, but having no acquaintance with the doctor, the gentleman thought he had menaced going to *burn his* house.

We had been talking of the French rondeaux one day, and *both* doctors said they were impracticable in English, so I made *this* — Musâ loquitur:

To *burn ye* with rapture, or melt you with pity,
A rondeau was never intended:
Yet the lines should be light, and the turn should be witty,
And the jest is to see how 'tis ended.
To finish it neat in an elegant style
Though Phœbus himself should discern ye;

And though to throw light on the troublesome toil,
Should he shine hot enough for to burn ye,
You still would be vex'd,
Incumbered, perplex'd,
So teizing the rhymes would return ye:
In a fit of despair
Then this moment forbear,
And let me some humility learn ye:
Leave writing with ease,
And each talent to please,
And making of rondeaux — to *Burney*.

"VOITURE'S FAMOUS RONDEAU

"Ma foi, c'est fait de moi, car Isabeau
M'a conjuré de lui faire un rondeau;
Cela me met dans une peine extrème,
Quoi! treize vers, huit en eau, cinq en ème!
Je lus ferois aussitôt un bateau.

"En voila cinq pourtant en un monceau
Faisons en huit — en invoquant brodéau;
Et puis mettons, par quelque stratagème
Ma foi c'est fait.

"Si je pouvois encore de mon cerveau
Tirer cinq vers, l'ouvrage seroit beau;
Mais cependant je suis dedans l'onzième
Et si je crois que je fais le douzième
En voila treize ajustès au niveau,
Ma foi c'est fait."

Is borrowed from a sonnet of Lope de Vega, admirably imitated in our collection of poems called "Dodsley's Miscellanies":—

"SONETO.

"Un soneto me manda hazer Violante
Que en mi vida me he visto en tanto aprieto.
Catorze versos dizen que es soneto
Burla burlando van los tres delante.

"Yo pensè que no hallara consonante
Y estoy a la mitad de otro quarteto;
Mas si me veo en el primo terceto,
No ay cosa en los quartetos que me espante.

"Per el primo terceto voy entrando
Y aun parece que entrè con pie derccho,
Pues fin con este verso le voy dando.

"Ya estoy en el segundo, y aun sospecho
Que voy los treze versos acabando
Contad si son catorze, y esta echo."

"IMITATION BY MR. RODERICK.

"Capricious Wray a sonnet needs must have,—
I ne'er was so put to't before, — a sonnet!
Why fourteen verses must be spent upon it,
'Tis good, howe'er, to have conquered the first stave.

"Yet I shall ne'er find rhymes enough by half,
Said I; and found myself in midst of the second:
If twice four verses were but fairly reckoned,
I should turn back on the hardest part, and laugh.

"Thus far with good success, I think, I've scribbled,
And of the twice seven lines have clean got o'er ten;
Courage! another 'll finish the first triplet.
Thanks to the Muse, my work begins to shorten,
There's thirteen lines got o'er driblet by driblet:
'Tis done; count how you will, I'll warrant there's
fourteen." *

"I begin now to let loose my mind after Queeney and Burney."—*Johnson*, June 19, 1779.

They were learning Latin of him; but Dr. Burney would not let *his* girl (Madam D'Arblay) go on: he thought grammar too masculine a study for misses.

"I shall be in danger of crying out, with Mr. Head, *catamaran*, whatever that may mean."—*Johnson.*

A comical hack joke. Ask me, and I will tell you one or *two* more tales about catamaran. Come; here it is: You do not hate nonsense with affected fastidiousness, or fastidious affectation, like those who have little sense. Turn the page then, over.

This Mr. *Head*, whose real name was *Plunkett*, a

* These trifles are principally curious as showing what clever people have thought clever. To borrow Johnson's words; many men, many women, or many children might have written either of the three.

low Irish parasite, dependant on Mr. Thrale primarily; and I suppose, secondarily on Mr. Murphy, was employed by them in various schemes of pleasure, as you men call profligacy: and on this occasion was deputed to amuse them by personating some *lord*, whom his patrons had promised to introduce to the beautiful Miss Gunnings when they first came over with intent to make their fortunes. He was received accordingly, and the girls played off their best airs, and cast kind looks on his introducers from time to time: till the fellow wearied, as Johnson says, and disgusted with his ill-acted character, burst out on a sudden as they sate at tea, and cried, "Catamaran! young gentlemen with two shoes and never a heel: when will you have done with silly jokes now? Lèdies;" turning to the future peeresses, "never mind these merry boys; but if you really can afford to pay for some incomparable silk stockings, or true India handkerchiefs, *here they are now*:" rummaging his smuggler's pocket; but the girls jumped up and turned them all three into the street, where Thrale and Murphy cursed their senseless assistant, and called him *Head*, like *lucus* a *non lucendo*, because they swore he had none. The duchess (of Hamilton), however, never did forgive this impudent frolic; Lady Coventry, more prudently, pretended to forget it.

Catamaran! was probably a mere Irish exclamation which burst from the fellow when impatient to be selling his smuggled goods. There is exactly such a character in Richardson's "Clarissa:" Captain Tomlinson, employed by Lovelace.

"You and Mrs. —— must keep Mrs. —— about you; and try to make a wit of her. She will be a little unskilful in her first essays; but you will see how precept and example will bring her forwards. Surely it is very fine to have your powers. The wits court you, and the Methodists love you, and the whole world runs about you; and you write me word how well you can do without me: and so, go thy ways poor Jack."—*Johnson*, April 15, 1780.

The names are filled with those of Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Byron. It would seem that Johnson was of opinion with Sydney Smith, who contends in his lectures that wit may be acquired like other talents or accomplishments.

"But —— and you have had, with all your adulations, nothing finer said of you than was said last Saturday night of Burke and me. We were at the Bishop of ——'s, a bishop little better than *your* bishop; and towards twelve we fell into talk, to which the ladies listened, just as they do to you; and said, as I heard, *there is no rising unless somebody will cry fire.*"—*Johnson*, May, 23, 1780.

The lady was Mrs. Montague; Johnson's bishop was the Bishop of St. Asaph (Shipley); Mrs. P.'s, the Bishop of Peterborough (Hinchliffe).

Mrs. Piozzi replies: "I have no care about enjoying undivided empire, nor any thoughts of disputing it with Mrs. Montagu. She considers her title as indisputable most probably, though I am sure I never heard

her urge it. Queen Elizabeth, you remember, would not suffer hers to be inquired into, and I have read somewhere that the Great Mogul is never crowned."

In a postscript she says: "Apropos to gallantry, here is a gentleman hooted out of Bath for showing a lady's loveletters to him; and such is the resentment of all the females, that even the house-maid refused to make his bed. I think them perfectly right, as he has broken all the common ties of society; and if he were to sleep on straw for half a year instead of our old favourites the Capucin friars, it would do him no harm, and set the men a good example."

In the margin is written "Mr. Wade."

"Gluttony is, I think, less common among women than among men. Women commonly eat more sparingly, and are less curious in the choice of meat; but if once you find a woman gluttonous, expect from her very little virtue. Her mind is enslaved to the lowest and grossest temptation.

"Of men, the examples are sufficiently common. I had a friend, of great eminence in the learned and the witty world, who had hung up some pots on his wall to furnish nests for sparrows. The poor sparrows, not knowing his character, were seduced by the convenience, and I never heard any man speak of any future enjoyment with such contortions of delight as he exhibited, when he talked of eating the young ones."—*Johnson.*

The name of Isaac Hawkins Browne is written in

the margin, and it is added that the young sparrows were eaten in a pie.

Stonehenge. — I saw Stonehenge once before this letter was written, in company of my father, who said it was Druidical: I saw it again seven years or more, *ten* years perhaps, in company of my second husband, and I saw it with Miss Thrales in June, 1784. I fancy it was Saxon for my own part; a monument to the valour of Hengist. It is *Stone Henge.*

"Mrs. Davenant says, that you regain your health. That you regain your health is more than a common recovery; because I infer, that you regain your peace of mind. Settle your thoughts and controul your imagination, and think no more of Hesperian felicity. Gather yourself and your children into a little system, in which each may promote the ease, the safety, and pleasure of the rest." — *Johnson.*

Mrs. D'Avenant neither knew nor cared, as she wanted her brother Harry Cotton to marry Lady Keith, and I offered my estate with her. Miss Thrale said she wished to have nothing to do either with my family or my fortune. They were all cruel and all insulting.

"DEAR SIR,—Communicate your letters regularly. Your father's inexorability not only grieves but amazes me. He is your father. He was always accounted a wise man; nor do I remember any thing to the disadvantage of his good nature; but in his refusal to

assist you, there is neither good nature, fatherhood, nor wisdom."—*Johnson.*

I think you will be surprised to hear that this so serious letter should have been written to the crazy fellow, of whom a ludicrous story is told in the "Anecdotes": Joe Simson, as Doctor Johnson called him, when he related the ridiculous incidents of his marriage, his kept mistress, his footman, and himself; all getting so drunk with the nuptial bowl of punch, purchased with borrowed money: that the hero of the tale tumbled down stairs and broke his leg or arm, I forget which, and sent for Doctor Johnson to assist him. He had another friend of much the same description, though this gentleman was a lawyer: the other, a poet. . . Boyce was the author of some pretty things in the "Gentleman's Magazine," and Johnson showed me the following verses in manuscript, which I translated: but which are not half so pleasant as was his account of Mr. Boyce lying a-bed: not for lack of a shirt, because he seldom wore one; supplying the want with white paper wristbands: but for want of his scarlet cloak, laced with gold, his usual covering; which lay unredeemed at the pawnbrokers. The verses were addressed to Cave, of St. John's Gate, who saved him from prison *that* time at least:—

"Hodie, teste Cœlo summo
Sine pane, sine nummo;
Sorte positus infeste
Scribo tibi dolens mæste:

Fame, bile, tamet jecur,
Urbane! mitte opem precor:
Tibi enim cor humanum
Non à malis alienum;
Mihi mens nec male grato,
Pro a te favore dato.
Ex gehennâ debitoria,
Vulgò, domo spongiatoria."

Oh witness Heaven for me this day
That I've no pelf my debts to pay:
No bread, nor halfpenny to buy it,
No peace of mind or household quiet.
My liver swell'd with bile and hunger
Will burst me if I wait much longer.
Thou hast a heart humane they say,
Oh then a little money—pray.
Nor further press me on my fate
And fix me at the begging grate:
Sufficient in this hell to souse
Vulgarly called a sponging house.

Of this curious creature I have heard Johnson tell how he remained fasting three whole days: and at the end when his consoling friend brought him a nice beef-steak, how he refused to touch it till the dish (he had no plate) had been properly rubbed over with *shalot*. "What inhabitants this world has in it!"

"You were kind in paying my forfeits at the club;

it cannot be expected that many should meet in the summer, however they that continue in town should keep up appearances as well as they can. I hope to be again among you." — *Johnson.*

There is a story of poor dear Garrick, whose attention to his money-stuff never forsook him — relating that when *his* last day was drawing to an end, *he* begged a gentleman present to pay his club forfeits, "and don't let them cheat you," added he, "for there cannot be above nine, and they will make out ten."

At the end of the second volume of "Letters" are printed several translations from Boëthius, the joint performances of Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Piozzi. She has written on the last leaf: —

Book 3rd, Metre 7, being completely *my own,* I would not *print,* though Dr. Johnson commended my doing it so well, and said he could not make it either more close or more correct:

> That pleasure leaves a parting pain
> Her veriest votaries maintain;
> Soon she deposits all her sweets,
> Soon like the roving bee retreats,
> Hasty, like her, she mounts on wing,
> And, like her, leaves th' envenomed sting.

In reference to the second line in this couplet:—

> Fondly view'd his following bride,
> Viewing lost, and losing died,—

she remarks:—

And this beautiful line, which I *saw him* compose, "you will find," said I, "in Fletcher's Bonduca." "Impossible," replies Dr. Johnson, "I never read a play of Beaumont and Fletcher's in my life." This passed in Southwark: when we went to Streatham Park, I took down the volume and showed him the line.

There is an allusion to this incident in the "Thraliana," and the entry is an additional illustration of the variety of her knowledge and the tenacity of her memory. It refers to Dr. Parker's complimentary verses describing an imaginary request of Apollo to the Graces and Muses to admit her of their number, and concluding with these lines: —

> "Henceforth acknowledge every pen
> The Graces *four*, the Muses *ten*."

For a long time (she writes) I thought this conceit original, but it is not. There is an old Greek epigram only of two lines which the doctor has here spun into length (*vide* "Anthol." lib. 7), and there is some account of it too in Bonhours.

What, however, is much more extraordinary, is that the famous Tristram Shandy itself is not absolutely original; for when I was at Derby in the summer of 1744, I strolled by mere chance into a bookseller's shop, where however I could find nothing to tempt curiosity but a strange book about Corporal Bates, which I bought and read for want of better sport, and found it to be the very novel from which Sterne took his first idea. The character of Uncle Toby, the behaviour of

Corporal Trim, even the name of Tristram itself, seems to be borrowed from this stupid history of Corporal Bates, forsooth. I now wish I had pursued Mr. Murphy's advice of marking down all passages from different books which strike, by their resemblance to each other, as fast as they fell in my way; for one forgets again in the hurry and tumult of life's cares and pleasures, almost everything that one does not commit to paper.

The verses written by Bentley upon Learning, and published in Dodsley's Miscellanies, how like they are to Evelyn's verses on Virtue, published in Dryden's Miscellanies! yet I do not suppose them a plagiarism. Old Bentley would have scorned such tricks; besides, what passed once between myself and Mr. Johnson should cure me of suspicion in these cases.

NOTES ON WRAXALL'S "HISTORICAL MEMOIRS OF MY OWN TIME."

I SEND Wraxall with the quartos, that you may read something written *of* your poor friend as well as something written *by* her. His book will be a relief when you get into the dark ages of "Retrospection."—*Mrs. Piozzi to Sir James Fellowes.*

Her note on Wraxall's statement relating to Marie Antoinette's first confinement is:—

You see how cautious Sir N. Wraxall is — but you may likewise see through his caution. *He* knew no doubt better than myself, that about this time a swathed baby made of white marble was laid at the bed chamber door, with this inscription:—

"Je ne suis point de Cire — subintelligitur Sire,
Je suis de pierre — subintelligur Pierre."

A Life Guard Man as I was informed.

The Dauphin, who died very young, and the other, who lived to suffer still more — whom every one pities, are mentioned in the 2nd vol., but I can't find the place now. Ils étoient *vrais Descendans* de Louis XIV., mais comment? Juste Ciel!

In reference to Wraxall's description of the celebrated women of the day, she has pasted in (besides the verses Vol. I. p. 49), copies of the following:

THE PLANETS.

(Said to be written by Charles Fox.)

With Devon's girl so blythe and gay,
I well could like to sport and play;
With Jersey would the time beguile,
With Melbourne titter, sneer and smile,
With Bouverie one would wish to sin,
With Damer I could only grin:
But to them all I'd bid adieu,
To pass my life and think with Crewe.

THE PLEIADES.

(Said to be written by Mr. Chamberlayne, who threw himself out of the window.)

With charming Cholmondeley well one might
Pass half the day, and all the night;
From Montague's more fertile mind
Perpetual source of pleasures find:
Of Tully's Latin, Homer's Greek,
With learned Carter one could speak;
With Thrale converse in purest ease,
Of letters, life, and languages.
But if I dare to talk with Crewe,
My ease, my peace, my heart adieu!

Sweet Greville! whose too feeling heart
By love was once betrayed,
With Sappho's ardour, Sappho's art,
For cool indifference prayed:
Who can endure a prayer from you
So selfish and confined?
You should — when you produced a Crewe,
Have prayed for all mankind.

The verses on Henrietta de Coligny, Comtesse de la Suze, are quoted by Wraxall:—

Quæ Dea sublimi vehitur per inania curru?
An Juno, an Pallas, an Venus ipsa venit?
Si genus inspicias, Juno: si scripta, Minerva:
Si spectes oculos, Mater Amoris erit.

They are thus paraphrased in a marginal note by Mrs. Piozzi:

Her birth examined, Juno we discern,
Her learning not Minerva's self denies:
From such perfections dazzled should I turn,
But that Love's mother laughs in both her eyes.

Note.— When the King of Sweden was murdered in a ballroom, by Ankerstroom, about the year 1792, there was a comically impudent caricature published representing George the Third, with a letter in his hand and a label out of his mouth, saying, *What, what, what! Shot, shot, shot!*

"The last Princess of the Stuart line who reigned in this country, has been accused of a similar passion (for drink), if we may believe the secret history of that time, or trust to the couplet which was affixed to the pedestal of her statue in front of St. Paul's, by the satirical wits of 1714."—*Wraxall.*

Note. — Brandy-faced Nan has left us in the lurch,
Her face to the brandy shop, and her—to the church.

VERSES ON CATHERINE OF RUSSIA.

Elle fit oublier par un esprit sublime
D'un pouvoir odieux les enormes abus;
Et sur un trône acquis par le crime
Elle se maintint par les vertus.

Her dazzling reign so brightly shone
Few sought to mark the crimes they courted;
Whilst on her ill acquired throne,
She sate by virtue's self supported.

"The Countess Cowper was at this time distinguished by his (the Grand Duke Leopold's) attachment; and the exertion of his interest with Joseph the Second his brother, procured her husband, Lord Cowper, to be created soon afterwards a Prince of the German Empire."—*Wraxall.*

Note. — She was beautiful when no longer a court favourite, in 1786. Her attachment was then to Mr. Merry, the highly accomplished poet, known afterwards by name of Della Crusca.

"In 1779, Charles Edward exhibited to the world a very humiliating spectacle."—*Wraxall.*

Note. — Still more so at Florence, in 1786. Count Alfieri had taken away his consort, and he was under the dominion and care of a natural daughter, who wore the Garter, and was called Duchess of Albany. She checked him when he drank too much, or when he talked too much. Poor soul! Though one evening, he called Mr. Greatheed up to him, and said in good English, and a loud though cracked voice: 'I will speak to my own subjects my own way, *sare.* Ay, and I will soon speak to you, Sir, in Westminster Hall.' The Duchess shrugged her shoulders.

"It was universally believed that he (Rodney) had been distinguished in his youth, by the personal attachment of the Princess Amelia, daughter of George the Second, who displayed the same partiality for Rodney, which her cousin, the Princess Amelia of Prussia, manifested for Trenck. A living evidence of the former connexion existed, unless fame had recourse to fiction for support. But, detraction, in every age, from Elizabeth down to the present times, has not spared the most illustrious females."—*Wraxall.*

Note. — Meaning, I suppose, the famous Miss Ashe, who, after many adventures, married Captain Falkner of the Royal Navy. She was a pretty creature, but particularly small in her person. *Little* Miss Ashe was the name she went by, yet I should think Rodney scarce

old enough to have been her father. Her *mother*, people spoke of, as with certainty.

THE LYTTELTON GHOST STORY.

"Lyttelton, when scarcely thirty-six, breathed his last at a country house near Epsom, called Pit Place, from its situation in a chalk pit; where he witnessed, as he conceived, a supernatural appearance."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—He *did* so: but here the author must pardon me, and so must you, dear Sir, if I presume to say I can tell this tale *better;* meaning with more exactness, for truth constitutes the whole of its value.

Lord Westcote and Lord Sandys both told it *thus*, and they were familiar intimates at Streatham Park—where now their portraits hang in my library.

Lord Lyttelton was in London, and was gone to bed I *think* upon a Thursday night. He rang his bell suddenly and with great violence, and his valet on entering found him much disordered, protesting he had been, or had fancied himself, plagued with a white bird fluttering within his curtains. "When, however, (continued he) I seemed to have driven her away, a female figure stood at my feet in long drapery, and said 'Prepare to die, my Lord, you'll soon be called.' "How soon? how soon?" said I, "in three years?" 'Three years,' replied she, tauntingly, 'three days,' and vanished." Williams the man servant related this to his friends of course; and the town talk was all about

Lord Lyttelton's dream; he himself ran to his uncle with it, to Lord Westcote; who confessed having reproved him pretty sharply for losing time in the invention of empty stories (such he accounted it), instead of thinking about the speech he was to make a few days after.

Lord Sandys was milder; saying, "My dear fellow, if you believe this strange occurrence, and would have us believe it; be persuaded to change your conduct, and give up that silly frolic which you told us of. I mean going next Sunday — was it not? to Woodcote; but I suppose 'tis only one of your wondrous fine devices to make us plain folks stare: so drink a dish of chocolate and talk of something else."

On Saturday, after we had talked this over at Streatham Park, a lady late from Wales dropt in, and told us she had been at Drury Lane last night. "How were you entertained?" said I; "Very strangely *indeed*," was the reply; "not with the play though, for I scarce knew what they acted — but with the discourse of Captain Ascough or Askew — so his companions called him — who averred that a friend of his, the profligate Lord Lyttelton, as I understood by them, had certainly seen a spirit, who has warned him that he is to die within the next three days, and I have thought of nothing else ever since."

No further accounts reached Streatham Park till Monday morning, when every tongue was telling how a Mrs. Flood and two Miss Amphlets, demirep beauties, had passed over Westminster Bridge by the earliest

hour, looking like corpses from illness occasioned by terror, and escorted by this Captain Ascough to town. The man Williams' constant and unvarying tale tallied with *his*, who said, they had been passing the time appointed in great gayety; some other girls and gentlemen of the country having in some measure joined the party for dinner only, but leaving these before midnight. That on Sunday Lord Lyttelton drew out his watch at eleven o'clock, and said, "Well, now I *must* leave you, agreeable as all of you are; because I mean to meditate on the next Wednesday's speech, and have actually brought some books with me." "Oh, but the ghost! the ghost!" exclaimed one of Miss Amphlets laughing. "Oh, don't you see that we have *bilked the bitch*," says Lord Lyttelton, showing his watch, and running from them up stairs, where Williams had set out the reading table, &c., and put his master on the yellow night gown, which he always used. Lord Lyttelton then said, "Make up my five grains of rhubarb and peppermint water and leave me; but, did you remember to bring rolls enough from London?" "I brought none, my Lord; I have found a baker here at Epsom that makes them just as your Lordship likes"—describing how—and stirring the mixture as he spoke. "What are you using?" cries my Lord—"a toothpick!" "A clean one, *indeed*, my Lord." "You lazy devil—go fetch a spoon directly;" he did so; but heard a noise in the room and hastened back, to find his master fallen over the table, books and all. He raised him; "Speak to me, my Lord — speak for God's sake, dear

my Lord." "Ah, Williams!" was his last and only word. Williams ran down to the dissolute company below, his watch in his hand. "Not twelve o'clock *yet*," he exclaimed, "and dead — dead."

They all bore witness that no violence came near the man, and I do *think* that some judicial process then proclaimed him—"Dead by the visitation of God." This, however, might be my hearing those words from friends and acquaintances relating the incident; but when it was reported twenty years after, that Lord Lyttelton committed suicide, I knew *that* was an error, or a falsity.

Of this event, however, few people spoke after the first bustle; and I had changed my situation and associates so completely, that it lay loose in my mind — never forgotten, though in a manner unremembered.

Chance, however, threw me into company of the gay and facetious Miles Peter Andrews, with whom and Mr. Greatheed's family, and Mrs. Siddons, and Sir Charles Hotham, and a long et cetera, an entertaining day had been passed sometime in the year 1795, if I remember rightly; and Mrs. Merrick Hoare, assuming intimacy, said, "Now, dear Mr. Andrews, that the Pigous are gone, and everybody is gone but ourselves, *do* tell my mother your *own* story of Lord Lyttelton." He hesitated, and I pressed him, urging my long past acquaintance with his Lordship's uncles — the bishop and Lord Westcote. He looked uneasily at me, but I soothed, and Sophia gave him no quarter; so with something of an appeal to her that the tale would be as she had learned it from her friends the Pigous, and from

himself, he began by saying: "Lord Lyttelton and I had lived long in great familiarity, and had agreed that whichever quitted this world first should visit the other. Neither of us being sick, however, such thoughts were at the time of his death, poor fellow! furthest from my mind.

"Lord Lyttelton had asked me to make one of his mad party to Woodcote or Pitt Place, in Surrey, on such a day, but I was engaged to the Pigous you saw this evening, and could not go. They then lived in Hertfordshire; I went down thither on the Sunday, and dined with them and their very few, and very sober friends, who went away in the evening. At eleven o'clock I retired to my apartment: it was broad moonlight and I put out my candle: when just as I seemed dropping asleep, Lord Lyttelton thrust himself between the curtains, dressed in his own yellow night gown that he used to read in, and said in a mournful tone, '*Ah, Andrews, it's all over.*' 'Oh,' replied I quickly, 'are you there, you dog?' and recollecting there was but one door to the room, rushed out at it — locked it, and held the key in my hand, calling to the housekeeper and butler, whose voices I heard putting the things away, to ask when Lord Lyttelton arrived, and what trick he was meditating. The servants made answer with much amazement, that no such arrival had taken place; but I assured them I had seen, and spoken to him, and could produce him, 'for here,' said I, '*he is;* under fast lock and key.' We opened the door, and found no one, but in two or three days heard that he died at that very moment, near Epsom in Surrey."

"After a pause, I said very seriously to Mr. Andrews, 'Were you quite sober, Sir?' 'As you are now,' replied he; 'and I did think I saw Lord Lyttelton as I now think that I see you.' '*Did* think, Sir? do you *now* think it?' 'I should most undoubtedly think it, but that so many people for so many years have told me I did not see him,' said he. We made a few serious reflections and parted."

In reference to Wraxall's appeal to the confirmatory testimony of the Dowager Lady Lyttelton, she adds: "Lady Lyttelton's imagination was supposed stronger than her veracity. She was *scouted* (as the coarse phrase is) by the family, and with good talents was, I fear, little esteemed by any one, though daughter to Sir Robert Rich, and had been pretty."

"'A day or two before the 7th of June,' said he, 'Count Maltzan, then the Prussian Minister at our Court, called on me, and informed me that the mob had determined to attack the Bank.'"—*Wraxall.*

Note.—The foreigners always obtain the first intelligence of everything. It was the Marquis del Campo who himself informed the Queen of Peg Nicholson's attempt to assassinate George the Third. And one of the Ministers of a foreign Court was first to learn the meditated escape of Buonaparte from Elba. *

* This is far from clear. The Duke of Wellington told Rogers that *he* got the first intelligence from the English minister at Florence. It is one of the most curious cases of conflicting evidence that can be named. See the Edinburgh Review, No. 227. (July 1860), pp. 235, 236.

"Suspicions were thrown on the Earl of Shelburne, probably with great injustice. The natural expectation of producing a change in Ministry, was imagined to suspend or supersede in certain minds, every other consideration; and it was even pretended, though on very insufficient grounds, that Peers did not scruple to take an active part in the worst excesses of the night of the 7th of June."*—*Wraxall.*

Note.—A man remarkable for duplicity will be always suspected whether deserving suspicion or no. Gainsborough drew Lord Shelburne's portrait: my Lord complained it was not like. The painter said "*he* did not approve it, and begged to try again." Failing *this* time, however, he flung away his pencil saying, "D—— it, I never could see through varnish, and there's an end."

"Sir Fletcher Norton, though perhaps justly accused, as a professional man, of preferring profit to conscientious delicacy of principle; and though denominated in the coarse satires or caricatures of that day, by the epithet of 'Sir Bullface Doublefee;' yet possessed eminent parliamentary, as well as legal talents."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—One of which I remember, except the second line, which is not exact:

* It was a current story, which I have heard Lord Macaulay relate, that the late Right Honourable T. Grenville was with a party that broke into the Admiralty, and that the *second* time he entered it was as First Lord.

" Careless of censure, and no fool to fame,
Firm in his double post and double fees;
Sir Fletcher standing without fear or shame,
Pockets the cash, and let's them laugh that please.

" So on a market day, stands Whatley's bear,
In spite of all their noise and hurly burley;
Fixed on his double post, secure in air,
Munching his bunch of grapes, and looking surly."

The Bear at Devizes was then kept by one Whatley, and stood upon a monstrous double signpost high up in the air, when some wag wrote these verses with a diamond on the window of an eating-room belonging to the inn. They were taken of course into everybody's scrap book, or everybody's memory.

Note on George the Third.—When the present King was quite a lad, there was a young fellow about the Prince's Court, who being thought natural son to my uncle Robert, was petted and provided for in some manner by the family, and used to visit familiarly at my mother's; who said that he told her how one day the two eldest boys were playing in the Princess's apartment, when the second said suddenly, " Brother, when you and I are *men grown*, you shall marry a wife and I'll keep a mistress." " What you say there? you naughty boy," exclaimed the mother, " You better to learn your pronouns as preceptor bid you; I believe you not know what it is — a pronoun."

"Be quiet, Eddy," says the King; "we shall have anger presently for your nonsense. Fletcher! (to my courtier cousin) give us the books." "Let them alone," cries Prince Edward; "I know what it is without a book: a pronoun is to a noun what a mistress is to a wife—a substitute and a representative." The Princess burst out o' laughing and turned them all out of the room.

Prince Edward was the Duke of York, who died at Monaco in Italy

Mrs. Crewe and Mrs. Bouverie.—The two fashionable belles about the Court and town had been painted by Reynolds in character of two shepherdesses, with a pensive air as if appealing to each other, about the year 1770, or perhaps earlier; and there was written under the picture: "Et in Arcadia ego." When the Exhibition was arranging, the members and their friends went and looked the works over; "What can this mean?" said Dr. Johnson; "it seems very nonsensical — *I am in Arcadia.*" "Well! what of that! The King could have told you," replied the painter. "*He* saw it yesterday, and said at once, 'Oh, there is a tombstone in the back-ground. Ay, ay, death is even in Arcadia.'"

The thought is borrowed from Poussin; where the gay frolickers stumble over a death's head, with a scroll proceeding from his mouth, saying, "Et in Arcadia *ego.*"

'Tis said that those who seek *one* thing, often find a better which was not the primary object of their

search. Queen Caroline looked for popular applause, and gained private esteem. In pursuit of her original desire to please every one who was presented, however, she made herself acquainted with the well-known events in English History; and having been told that a Derbyshire baronet, Sir Woolston Dixie, lived near the spot where Richard the Third lost his life and crown, readily adverted to that occurrence, and when *his* name was mentioned, said "Oh, Sir! it has been related to me your connexion with Bosworth Field and the *memorable battle* fought there." The gentleman's face, even redder than before, swelled with indignation, till at last he broke out with no very decorous vehemence of protestation, that all her Majesty had heard concerning it was false and groundless; and that he would find a way to make those repent who had filled the ears of his Sovereign with such gross untruths. "God forgive my great sin!" cried the astonished Princess; and Sir Woolston Dixie left the drawing-room in an agony scarce to be described.

The misintelligence, as the French call it, was occasioned by the baronet's utter ignorance of historic literature. He was a brutal fellow, and having assaulted a tinker some day crossing Bosworth Field, the tinker laid down his tools and beat him severely; which his merry neighbours heard with pleasure, and called this luckless encounter, naturally enough, *The Battle of Bosworth:* while poor Sir Woolston, having never heard of any other contest in the place, except his own,

made no doubt but that the Queen had heard of his disgrace, and took that opportunity to ridicule him for it.

I must add, that such instances of gross ignorance in country gentlemen were not—as now—incompatible with birth, rank, or fortune; I mean in the days when Caroline of Anspach canvassed her drawing-room at St. James's.

Lady Archibald Hamilton formed during many years, the object of Frederick's avowed, and particular attachment.

She was mother to Archdeacon Hamilton, who lived his last years and died in the Circus here at Bath. He was very unhappy in his family; and when *one* observed accidentally on *another* friend's ill-fortune — "has he three children?" says poor Hamilton; "and are they like mine?"* His mother was the Delamira of the "Tatler." His daughter is the Countess of Aldborough.

"The inglorious naval engagement in the Mediterranean, between Byng and La Galissoniere, for his conduct in which the former of those admirals suffered."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—See "Retrospection," 2nd vol., page 423, near the bottom. I had more grace than to name my own father and uncle in a quarto volume meant for public view; but I may tell *you* thus privately, and

* "What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?" *Lear.*

after more than half a century has past, how my uncle (who was then judge of the Admiralty) felt affected, when the old Duke of Newcastle wrung him by the hand and said, "My dear Sir Thomas, England has seen her best days. We are all undone. This d—— fellow has done for us, and all is over."

"The Treasury, the Admiralty, the War Office, all obeyed his (the first Pitt's) orders with prompt and implicit submission. Lord Anson and the Duke of Newcastle, sometimes, it is true, remonstrated, and often complained; but always finished by compliance." —*Wraxall.*

Note.—Their compliance was submission of the most unqualified kind, and the patience with which they waited in the anti-room, while Mr. Pitt was examining some machinery brought for his inspection by Nuttal the engine maker in Long Acre, was truly laughable.

"All circumstances fully weighed, my own conviction is, that the Letters of 'Junius' were written by the Right Honourable William Gerard Hamilton commonly designated by the nickname of 'Single Speech Hamilton.'"—*Wraxall.*

Note.—So it is *mine.* I well remember when they were most talked of—and N. Seward said, "How the arrows of Junius were sure to wound, and likely to stick." "Yes, Sir," replied Dr. Johnson; "yet let us distinguish between the venom of the shaft, and the vigour of the bow." At which expression Mr. Hamilton's counten-

ance fell in a manner that to *me* betrayed the author. Johnson repeated the expression in his next pamphlet — and Junius *wrote no more.*

Note.—Lord Thurlow was storming one day at his old valet, who thought little of a violence with which he had been long familiar, and "Go to the devil *do*," cries the enraged master; "Go, I say, to the devil." "Give me a character, my Lord," replied the fellow, drily; "people like, you know, to have characters from their acquaintance."

"The expression of his (the first Lord Liverpool's) countenance, I find it difficult to describe."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—It *was* very peculiar, but he was a delightful companion in social life. I know few people whose conversation was more pleasingly diversified with fact and sentiment, narration and reflection, than that of the first Lord Liverpool.

"'Charles Fox,' observed he (Mr. Boothby) 'is unquestionably a man of first-rate talents, but so deficient in judgment, as never to have succeeded in any object during his whole life. He loved only three things; women, play, and politics. Yet, at no period, did he ever form a creditable connexion with a woman. He lost his whole fortune at the gaming-table; and with the exception of about eleven months, he has remained always in Opposition.' It is difficult to dispute the justice of this portrait."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—He preferred Mrs. (now Lady) Crewe, to all

women living, but Lady Crewe never lost an atom of character — I mean female honour. She loved high play and dissipation, but was no sensualist.

Note.—Lord Sandwich came very early into a very small paternal estate; and his first entrance into life was marked by an apparently warm disposition towards virtue. He was, however, avowedly poor and proud; said that Sir Robert Walpole possessed no powers of gaining him over from the opposition party, whilst he was contented to live with the woman of his heart in a small house somewhere about Westminster, and *walk* to the House arm-in-arm with one friend, for whose opinions he had the highest deference. Sir Robert laughed, and only said, "We shall see how all this ends."

The Countess, though forty-four years old when Lord Sandwich came of age and could not be persuaded to forbear pursuing her, brought him a son, which cost her future health, and with her health that flexibility of temper, which before marriage he deemed her possessed of. But,

> "To win a man when all our pains succeed,
> The way to keep him is a task indeed."

Virtue and sense were soon found insufficient, joined to a faded form and fretted mind, wherein resided sullen disapprobation of all that frolic playfulness to which her lord was naturally prone, and which his interested friend taught him to consider as innocent, even when combined with late hours, loose company,

and sometimes higher play than he could afford; although Lord Sandwich never was a *rated* gamester like Fox, or Fitzpatrick, &c. Ill received at home, however, his pleasures drew him thence, and *they*, growing hourly more and more expensive, as his friend's amusements were all placed to his account.

The Minister felt happy to provide for both, and this young nobleman owed to his wife's stern virtue, and his companion's insidious indulgences, a character no man but Churchill could pourtray — no man, I hope besides himself, deserve:

> "Is God's most holy name to be profan'd?
> His Word rejected, and his laws arraign'd:
> His servants scorn'd as men who idly dream'd,
> His service laugh'd at; His dread Son blasphem'd?
> Is science by a scoundrel to be led?
> Are States to totter on a drunkard's head?
> Search earth, search hell, the Devil cannot find
> An agent like Lothario to his mind."

The *end* of such men (with regard to this life) is safer to imagine than describe. When talents, though they can't protect, reproach their mad possessors, and conscience, which congratulates the good man's exit, lighting his last steps with her hallowed taper:

> "Turns to a fury with a flaming torch,
> Quickly extinguished in mephitic gloom!"

Oh! let us, to use a phrase of Shakespear, *sweeten our imaginations:* and forgetting such characters,

rather recollect Doddridge's Epigram upon his own motto:—

"Dum vivimus, vivamus."

"Live while you live, the epicure will say,
And give to pleasure ev'ry passing day;
Live while you live, the sacred preacher cries,
And give to God each moment as it flies:
Lord! in *my* views, let both united be!
I live to pleasure whilst I live to Thee."

Now as a note to the third or fourth line of Churchill's verses, accept the following *true* anecdote:—

Lord Sandwich had trained up a huge baboon that he was fond of, to play the part of a clergyman, dressed in canonicals, and make some buffoon imitation of saying grace. Among many merry friends round the table, sat a Mr. Scott, afterwards well known by name of Antisejanus; but then a mere dependent servitor at college, and humble play-fellow of young Hinchinbroke. The ape had no sooner finished his grimaces, and taken leave of the company, than Scott unexpectedly, but unabashed, stood up and said:—

"I protest, my lord, I intended doing this duty myself, not knowing till now, that your lordship had so *near a relation in orders*." *

* At a supper of the Hell-fire Club, a chair was left vacant at the head of the table for the Devil. In the height of the revelry, the ape unexpectedly took his seat upon it, and the company, conceiving the Spirit of Evil to be among them, broke up in most admired confusion.

I must add that Lord Sandwich praised his wit and courage without ever resenting the liberty.

He had founded a society, denominated from his own name, "The Franciscans," who, to the number of twelve, met at Medmenham Abbey, near Marlow, in Bucks, on the banks of the Thames.

The best account of these horrors, and the least offensive, is in "Chrysal; or, the Adventures of a Guinea," written by Smollet.

"Beauclerc discovered him (Fox) intently engaged in reading a Greek Herodotus. 'What would you have me do,' said he, 'I have lost my last shilling!' Such was the elasticity, suavity, and equality of disposition that characterised him; and with so little effort did he pass from profligate dissipation to researches of taste or literature."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—I have heard this story before, and believe it is true. Topham Beauclerc (wicked and profligate as he wished to be accounted) was yet a man of very strict veracity. Oh Lord! how I did hate that horrid Beauclerc!

"If Burke really believed the facts that he laid down (regarding the American war), what are we to think of his judgment!"—*Wraxall.*

Note.—Burke troubled himself but little to think on what he had said; he spoke for present and immediate effect, rarely if ever missing his aim; because, like Doctor

Johnson, he always *spoke his best,* whether on great or small occasions. One evening at Sir Joshua Reynolds' it was his humour to harangue in praise of the then ceded islands, and in their praise he said so much, that Mrs. Horneck, a widow with two beautiful daughters, resolved to lose no time in purchasing where such advantages would infallibly arise. She did so, and lost a large portion of her slender income. "Dear Sir," said I, when we met next, "how fatal has your eloquence proved to poor Mrs. Horneck!" "How fatal her own folly!" replied he; "Ods my life, must one swear to the truth of a song."

To Wraxall's remark that Burke's Irish accent was as strong as if he had never quitted the banks of the Shannon, she adds, "very true." The description of him as "gentle, mild, and amenable to argument in private society," is qualified by, "not very;" and in the sentence, "infinitely more respectable than Fox, he was nevertheless far less amiable," she proposes to replace "amiable" by "respected."

"It is difficult to do justice to the peculiar species of ugliness which characterised his (Dunning) person and figure, although he did not labour under any absolute deformity of shape or limb."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—Sir Joshua alone could give a good portrait of Dunning. His picture of Lord Shelburne, Lord Ashburton, and Colonel Barré, has surely no superior. The characters so admirable, the likenesses so strong."

Of the first Lord Loughborough she writes:

Wedderburn was particularly happy when speaking of Franklyn, who (he said) the Ministers had wantonly and foolishly made their enemy. An enemy so inveterate, said he, so merciless, and so implacable, that he resembles Zanga the Moor, in Young's tragedy of the "Revenge," who at length ends his hellish plot by saying:—

> "I forg'd the letter, and dispos'd the picture,
> I hated, I despis'd, and I destroy."

The quotation struck everyone.*

Benjamin Franklyn, who, by bringing a spark from Heaven, fulfilled the prophecies he pretended to disbelieve; Franklyn, who wrote a profane addition to the Book of Genesis, who hissed on the colonies against their parent country, who taught men to despise their Sovereign and insult their Redeemer; who did all the mischief in his power while living, and at last died, I think, in America; was beside all the rest, a plagiarist, as it appears; and the curious epitaph made *on* himself, and as we long believed, *by* himself, was, I am informed, borrowed without acknowledgment, from one, upon Jacob Tonson, to whom it was more appropriate, comparing himself to an old book, eaten by worms; which on some future day, however, should be new *edited*, after undergoing *revisal* and *correction* by the *Author*.

There are some exquisitely pretty stanzas, very

* Franklin never forgave this speech, and by making it Wedderburne aggravated the very mischief he was deprecating.

little known, written by one Mr. Dale, upon Franklyn's invention of a lamp, in which the flame was forced downward, burning in a new discovered method, contrary to nature. I had a rough copy of the verses, and they lay loose in the second volume of "Retrospection," but I suppose they dropped out, and I lost them, or they should have been written down here.

I cannot trust my memory to do them justice. The first stanzas praise his philosophical powers:—

"But to covet political fame,
Was in him a degrading ambition;
'Twas a *spark* that from Lucifer came,
And first kindled the blaze of sedition.

"May not Candour then write on his urn,
Here alas! lies a noted inventor;
Whose flame up to Heav'n ought to burn,
But *inverted*, descends *to the centre*." *

"Like his nephew, Mr. Fox, the Duke (of Richmond) did not spare the King, when addressing the House of Lords; and he was considered as peculiarly obnoxious at St. James's."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—He never forgave the preference given by the

* It is strange that she forgot to mention Turgot's famous motto for the bust of Franklin, by Houdon:—

"Eripuit cœlo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis."

Franklin's own criticism on it was that the thunder remained where he found it, and that more than a million of men co-operated with him in shaking off the monarchical rule of Great Britain.

King's *immediate advisers*, when there was question of a Consort to the English Throne, where he hoped to see his beautiful sister (Lady Sarah) seated — in vain! Lord Bute was too quick in providing a much safer partner.

"Burke exclaimed, that 'he (Pitt) was not merely a chip of the old block, but the old block itself.'"—*Wraxall.*

Note.—Not *quite.* The *old* block's *head* was beautiful, and the eyes in it brilliant with intelligence.

Note.— I have seen Sheridan (the father of R. B.) on the stage in former days, acting Horatio in Rowe's "Fair Penitent," to Garrick's Lothario; but of his powers as a lecturer, Mr. Murphy gave the most ludicrous account, taking him off with incomparable powers of mimicry—quite unequalled.

Note.—He (Lord Mulgrave) was a haughty spirited man, whom I should not suspect of any possible meanness, for any possible advantage. Rough as a boatswain, proud as a strong feeling of aristocracy could make him, and fond of coarse merriment, approaching to ill-manners, he was in society a dangerous converser: one never knew what he would say next. "Why Holla, Burke! (I heard him crying out on one occasion) What, you are rioting in puns now Johnson is away." Burke was indignant, and ready with a reply. But Lord Mulgrave drowned all in storms of laughter.

In reference to the "Optat Ephippia Bos piger" story

of Lord Falmouth and Pitt, told by Wraxall, she writes:—

I have heard my father relate the story somewhat differently, but in substance the same. *He* said some wag chalked the words on his (Lord Falmouth's) door, and that seeing them he exclaimed, "he would give 100*l.* to know who wrote them." The first friend he met said, "Give *me* the money, Horace wrote them." Then comes the next mistake, "Horace! a dog, after all his obligations to me," &c. *

A similar story to this was related to me in Italy. Cardinal Zanelli was pasquinaded at Rome for his ingratitude to the Dauphin of France, whose influence, exerted in his favour, had procured him the dignity of Eminenza. Zanelli's coat armour was a *vine;* the statue exhibited these words:—

"Plantavi *Vineam,* et fecit labruscas."

The enraged Cardinal, little skilled in Scripture learning, actually promised a reward to whoever would tell who wrote it. Next day Pasquin claimed the reward for himself, having marked under the words, 40*th chapter of Isaiah.*

Note.—In this memorable year, 1782, the "Atlas" man-of-war was launched, a three-decker of eminent beauty. We all know that the figure at the ship's head

* *i. e.* Horace Walpole. Lord Falmouth's family name was Boscawen, and he had just been soliciting the Garter.

corresponds with the name, and I was informed that Hercules's substitute was a most magnificent fellow, fit to support the globe. When, however, they came to ship her bowsprit, he stood so high, that something was found necessary to be done; and the rough carpenter, waiting no orders, cut part of the globe away which stood upon the hero's shoulders. When it was examined afterwards, the part lost to our possession was observed to be *America*. Sailors remarked the accident as ominous, and the event has not tended to lessen their credulity.

When Montcalm was dying of his wounds in the great battle which deprived us of General Wolfe, "Well, well!" said he, "England has torn North America from *us*, but she will one day tear herself from the mother country. Once free from the *French yoke*, she will endure *no other*."

My father said those were his very words: my father died in the year 1762, but he always predicted American Independence.

"During his elder brother's life, when only Lord Harry Powlett, he (the Duke of Bolton) had served in the royal navy, where, however, he acquired no laurels, and he was commonly supposed to be the 'Captain Whiffle' pourtrayed by Smollet, in his 'Roderick Random.'"—*Wraxall.*

Note. — I don't know whether this Lord Harry Powlett, or an uncle of his wearing the same name, was the person of whom my mother used to relate a ludicrous

anecdote. Some lady with whom *she* had been well acquainted, and to whom his lordship was observed to pay uncommon attentions, requested him to procure for her a pair of small monkies from East India — I forget the kind. Lord Harry, happy to oblige her, wrote immediately, depending on the best services of a distant friend, whom he had essentially served. Writing a bad hand, however, and spelling what he wrote for with more haste than correctness, he charged the gentleman to send him over *two* monkies, but the word being written *too*, and all the characters of one height, *100*,— what was poor Lord Harry Powlett's dismay, when a letter came to hand, with the news that he would receive fifty monkies by such a ship, and fifty more by the next conveyance, making up the *hundred* according to his lordship's commands!

Note.—They said Pitt and Legge went together like Cæsar and Bibulus,—and so they did; all the attention paid the *first*, and none to the *last*-named consul.

Note.—The following epigram was handed about to ridicule Sir Thomas Rumbold:—

"When Mackreith liv'd 'mong Arthur's crew,
He cried, Here, Rumbold, black my shoe;
And Rumbold answered, Yea, Bob.
But when return'd from Asia's land,
He proudly scorn'd that mean command,
And boldly answered, Nay, Bob (*Nabob*)."

Note.—On this occasion (victory over De Grasse in 1782) Rodney is said to have taught them the method of breaking the line, by which I have heard it asserted

that Lord Nelson won all his victories by sea, and Buonaparte by land; but which is a still stranger thing, Lord Glenbervie told me (and I believe him) that Epaminondas won the battles of Leuctra and Mantinea by the same manœuvre 2178 years ago.

"The Princess of Franca Villa was commonly supposed to have bestowed on him (Lord Rockingham) the same fatal present, which the 'Belle Ferroniere' conferred on Francis the First, King of France; and which, as we learn from Burnet *, the Countess of Southesk was said to have entailed on James, Duke of York, afterwards James the Second."—*Wraxall.*

In Italy it was supposed to have been the succession powder mingled with chocolate whilst in the cake, not in the liquid we drink. Acqua Toffana, and succession powder (polvere per successione) were administered, as I have heard, with certain although ill-understood effects. Lord Rockingham desired to be opened after his death, and was so.

On the application of the term "disinterested" to Archbishop Moore's conduct, in communicating to his pupil, the Duke of Marlborough, the advances of the Duchess Dowager, her note is:—

Disinterested is not quite the word to use. He served his interest in preferring the *Duke's* power to a connection with the *Duchess*, who had only her life

* The story is told in Grammont's Memoirs.

income to bestow, and a faded person possessing no attractions.

"There were a number of Members who regularly received from him (Pelham's Secretary of the Treasury) their payment or stipend at the end of every session in bank notes."—*Wraxall.*

Note.—I am sorry to read these things of Mr. Pelham, whom everybody loved, and Garrick praised so sweetly, saying:—

"Let others hail the rising sun,
I bow to that whose course is run,
Which sets in endless night;
Whose rays benignant bless'd our Isle,
Made peaceful nature round us smile,
With calm but cheerful light.

"See as you pass the crowded street,
Despondence clouds each face you meet,
All their lost friend deplore.
You read in every pensive eye,
You hear in every broken sigh,
That Pelham is no more."

This Ode, from whence I have selected two stanzas, not the best, and a comical thing called "The News Writers' Petition," that came out a very little while before, give one the impression of his having been a very honest man. I am quite sorry Wraxall's book tends so much to destroy that impression.

Pelham's death was curious, and he thought so; for it was his favourite maxim in politics, never to stir an

evil which lies quiet, "And now," said he, upon his death-bed to his doctor, "I die for having acted in contradiction to my own good rule—taking unnecessary medicines for a stone which lay still enough in my bladder, and might perhaps never have given me serious injury." But so it is, that though death certainly does *strike* the dart, it is often vice or folly poisons it— with regard to this world or the world to come.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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